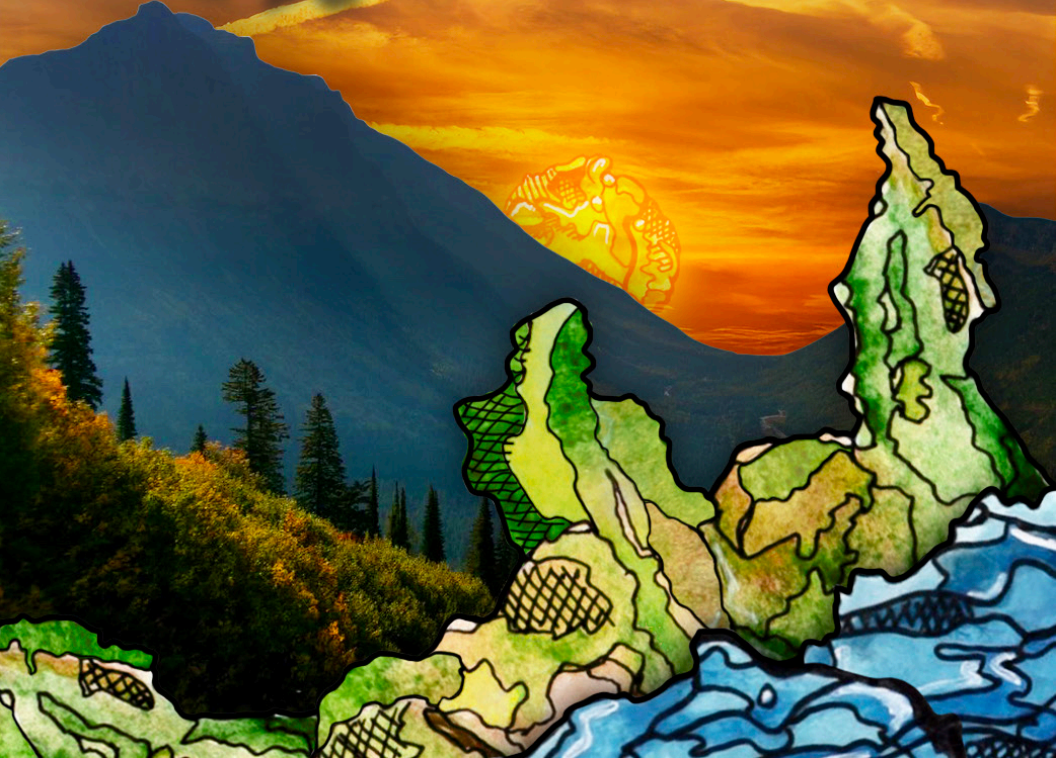


Floodwall

volume2, issue12

fall 2025



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Front and back cover: Collage of *Floodwall* 2.12 contributor art by Mathias Klinke, Rylee Lunnie, Jonathan Sladko, and Liv Wyland. Collage crafted by Janie Marino.

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From the Editors

Hello again, folks! We're thrilled to launch *Floodwall* 2.12, the latest issue of UND's student-run literary magazine! As the magazine's new managing editors, we—Vern Linstrom and Jasmine Patera—are stepping into this role for the first time without our remarkable predecessor, Caitlin Scheresky. We feel incredibly fortunate to have learned from her leadership and to have witnessed the care she poured into this publication. While this transition marks a new chapter, we've taken up the reins with the same passion and dedication that brought us to *Floodwall* in the first place. Our hope is that this love and attention shines through on every page of Volume 2, Issue 12. We've cherished the work of putting it together this fall, and we hope you enjoy reading it just as much.

It's hard not to feel a bit grim right now as the days grow increasingly short and (somehow) even colder. This is perhaps reflected in our collection this semester, which memorializes and laments the ending of relationships, the passing of loved ones, and the looming threat of time. You yourself may feel a bit dour as life's demands escalate. Reprieve, too, seems far off.

But what *Floodwall* prides itself on is creating a shelter for our community. That's what gives us life. Our cover this year—a collage of the published art and photography pieces from this issue, done by Janie Marino—reflects this. The collective efforts of each of us as creators invigorates and connects, sheltering us from the storm forming overhead. A lot of individuals work to create and develop *Floodwall*, and these efforts mean so much more when a thousand other things try to stop us from making art. Give our wonderful and dedicated team of student readers, section editors, copyeditors, chief copyeditors, design and layout volunteers, and proofreaders a huge round of applause; their efforts are what keep *Floodwall* afloat. Be sure to check out our masthead for the full list of volunteers.

We'd like to extend a special thanks to our advisors, Dr. Courtney Kersten and Dr. Patrick Henry, who patiently dealt with our many nervous

questions and dilemmas as we took over the editorial duties of *Floodwall*.

We'd also like to extend a special thanks to our contributors, who demonstrate the perseverance of creation in times of strife and hardship. We here at *Floodwall* are so proud of the work you've done and are very thankful that you trusted us with your creative work this semester. Thank you for keeping the spirit of creation alive. And, of course, a huge thanks to you, dear reader, for your appreciation and dedication to our lovely little magazine. Your support makes it all worth it.

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fiction

Post

Anya Unser

A final violent scream wipes out all the air in my lungs and I can feel my body heat radiate off of me. I can barely focus on not hyperventilating as I suck down breaths. My hands are still gripping the sides of the bed, and even though I can barely feel them, I force them to relax.

There is an overwhelming sound of chatter; everyone around me is talking. An unholy wail rises above the voices. It's unfamiliar.

The sound swims around the back of my head like an alarm clock in a dream. I read books on what is supposed to happen, but I'm not sure what's going on. I read books, though. That should count, right? Three, I think. Two and a half, maybe, because I skipped all of the pictures. I won't see all that anyway, really. Right? But I read books. So I guess I should be more prepared. I mean, I am prepared, I just don't *feel* prepared. I'm not really ready, I guess, but it's too late for that now.

I can't feel my legs.

Fluorescent lights really look like the sun if you stare at them long enough. I stare for a while. It's almost like I really am outside. My eyes trace the long shape of one of the lights above me. My hair sticks to my forehead and neck.

One of the doctors laughs as he cracks a joke to a nurse, who also laughs. He takes his position in front of me again. "All right, time to deliver the placenta now, sweetheart." Sweetheart. I'm twenty-six.

"Oh, you didn't do that yet?" My husband asks from his chair by

the door. He wanted to get the “best angle,” he told me. For the delivery and the game. “Picture-in-picture,” he laughed. I didn’t. I barely lift my head up to look at him. A blur of bright greens and blues.

“Nope, not yet,” the doctor winks at him. Some secret exchange between men. Two men and the woman whose only purpose to either of them is her “child-bearing hips.”

The placenta is delivered and I never want to talk about it again. They tell me to eat it but I don’t want to because the books I read said that I don’t have to. But I guess it’s like the whole breastfeeding versus formula debate. My husband wants me to breastfeed because it’ll keep my breasts larger for longer and because his mom did it that way, so therefore it’s the right way to do it. I don’t really want to think about it, but I bought a pump and have no formula, and what I can supposedly make is free, and I’m secretly afraid of all of those rumors on Facebook about the negative effects of formula. Reading them makes me more scared.

Something feels wrong, very wrong, but I can’t explain it, and even though the room is full of people, there is no one here to help me.

I’m bleeding through the mattress, I think. I call over a nurse two times before she comes over and I ask her to check if there’s a Jordan River of blood soaking the nice white sheets. She takes a few steps back, lifts the sheets, glances over, and tells me that everything is normal. I ask her what normal is and she says that I have nothing to worry about. I should drink more water, that’s what I need. The beaded condensation on the clear plastic cup makes me sick looking at it.

My eyes are drawn upward again. Years go by. What do they do if you die in a hospital?

Quiet cheering on the screen. “Damn it!”

I tell my husband I’m sorry for doing this on a Sunday. He doesn’t laugh.

Another nurse ducks her way into view. “Hey, Mama!” She does not know my name. “Ready for skin-to-skin?”

I say yes because the books told me to do that. She sets the squirming little thing on my open chest. It is a little cold, I think. I can’t remember what I’m supposed to do about that. The nurse shifts its blanket and my paper-thin hospital gown for warmth. Ah.

“A beautiful baby girl, seven pounds and two ounces. Have you thought of a name?”

I don't say anything because names have power and I don't really feel like I have that right now.

My husband walks over and, for the first time in the past ten hours, his skin brushes mine. A different skin to skin. He calls it cute and then jokes that if we keep this up, we're going to have to adopt a boy. I tell him that there is no "we" and that it's the male's job. He doesn't respond.

I finally look down at my chest. No hair, pink skin. Its eyes are closed. I am suddenly very aware of my breathing and have to do it manually instead of automatically. I hold back the yawn in my throat because I'm scared I'll accidentally move it and mess up somehow. I hold up my hand to make sure the fluorescent lights don't cast down on it. And, seeing its breath sync with mine, this wholly vulnerable creature, I start to think that maybe I can love this fear of mine. I know I'm supposed to, but it's not as automatic as everyone says it is. I mean, I don't think I could lift up a car or anything. But maybe I could just love it and that would be enough.

They tell my husband to take his shirt off and take the child away from me so he can do skin to skin too. The books agree that this is good. His face lights up as he stares down at our creation, and for a moment, I fall in love again, and I think that, maybe, my fears were made up, hormones or something. Then his eyes flicker up.

I lay back down in bed. Years go by, and I wonder if I'm too old to be a mother. Then I wonder if I'm too young. Then I wonder if it is kind of scandalous that I did this. After all, I had to have sex in order for this to happen. I remember the talks I received in high school. I was a virgin then. Now I'm twenty-six, and will have to give that speech when I'm forty. I'm going to be forty at some point. Soon, really. Am I too old to be a mother?

A nurse swaddles the child for us and my husband tries to rock it very unsteadily—little jolts instead of smooth swaying. I tell him to be careful, he could give it Shaking Baby Syndrome. He tells me that's not how it works but I disagree because I read books and he didn't. He sets it down in its clear plastic bed. A long series of high pitched dinosaur sounds fill the room as I study a new row of fluorescent lights. The weight of stares prickles my skin and I'm scared that I'm supposed to do something. I push myself up on my elbows and rub my eyes. A nurse eventually picks up the child and offers it to me. She gently pushes it in my arms, helps me sit up, and walks away.

We stare at the lights together. Even though its eyes are closed, I know it would stare if it could. I shade her eyes again. After a few minutes, I give it to my husband.

My family rushes in and my husband's family quickly follows twenty minutes later. They crowd around the child, gushing with loud whispers and clapping my husband's back. I am cold. I'm not upset at missing out on the conversation. They unwrap its blanket to count all its fingers and toes, which I realize I forgot to do. It has all of them, though. The average amount, I mean. They rewrap it, change its first diaper. Or second. I'm not sure. My mom tries to kiss it and I tell her not to because the books said it was bad for the health of something so vulnerable.

They all look up at me, startled. My father-in-law asks if he can hold it and I say sure and learn where my husband got his rocking style from. My mother-in-law coos, "She has your eyes!"

"Does she."

My husband shares the name and everyone congratulates him again. The view of their backs isn't very interesting, so I turn my head and focus on the crack in the paint on the wall in front of me, which has been bothering me since I was checked into this room.

"How are you doing, baby?" my mom asks.

"Well."

"Are you comfortable here?"

I blink a few times and slowly shift my gaze to the little table by the door. "I think some tulips would be nice."

"Well . . . we could get you some, if you'd like."

I don't respond.

"You must be tired."

"Yes," I say, and she turns back to the child.

It's seven at night and I have to pee. I managed the impossible earlier, but now this is my worst fear. I sit up in my bed and look around; there is no one in the room. I sigh and nervously press my shaking hand on the assistance button and press it again for a second time after counting to two hundred. I press it again after counting to four hundred.

I'm alone again.

Except for the child, but it doesn't count. And so I ease my legs gently over the bed, and I want to die for the millionth time today. Mak-

ing it to the bathroom was like crawling through the trenches. I can't remember how to assemble a postpartum pad, but I try my best. It is big and scary and basically a whole diaper. There is a lot of blood.

My heart stops for a second when I see a dark figure moving in the corner of my eye in the mirror. In the soft lighting, my eyes look darker and more tired. My hair is a mess. But my body, now a childless shell, looks the same. It is only for a second, but it feels like minutes.

I turn out the light before opening the door to leave.

The whole bathroom adventure took about forty minutes alone. I turn my head and my brow furrows at the little thing next to me. It doesn't seem real. It doesn't seem mine, or me, or whatever. We're roommates, really. I try to close my eyes, but sleep never comes.

"Hey, Mama!" Light pours through the crack in the door as a nurse peaks her head in.

I forgive her. I don't remember my name either.

The nurse checks and informs me that I did not, in fact, assemble my postpartum pad correctly, and shows me how to do it correctly again. I should have remembered that. It was in the books. She helps me to the bathroom again and asks me where my husband is. I tell her that he went home to sleep in a bed instead of a chair. At least, I think that's where he is. I can't remember too well. She supervises me assembling my pad correctly and helps me put on my pants, which I am grateful for beyond words. She guides me back to bed, and I grab her wrist as she begins to walk away.

I have her attention for ten seconds. I count to nine. Swallow, articulate, force the words out.

"I'm scared."

She gives me a knowing smile. "It's like that sometimes."

But I really am quite scared, and I don't think she really understands. I let go, and she leaves.

The door clicks shut.

Alone.

I write my bathroom instructions on the back of a card so I won't forget again.

The air stills whenever I look at the child. I can barely think, barely breathe. My body is as weightless as the child is. Before it can dare cry again, my eyes flutter, threatening to close.

I fall asleep looking at it.

Anya Unser is a freshman English major from Aberdeen, South Dakota. Post-master's degree, she plans to pursue a career in developmental editing. When she's not dedicating her time to speed-running her degree, she's either reading the same novel she's been trying to finish all year, watching *Gilmore Girls* again, or making yet another playlist on Spotify.

Diagenesis

Caius Buran

The tourists stumble behind Jerico, unsteady like newborn horses traipsing after their mothers in grasses their rot will one day feed. They're dead, though they still move. Slick calcite formations glimmer in the pale, ever-dimming beams of the group's headlamps bobbing along the cave's walls. He knows this dread, this quiet, this unsaid.

His expeditions to the deepest, darkest depths have been nothing . . . nothing at all compared to finding Father in the water. Jerico remembers the way blood danced in the creek:

 ribboning across the stones,
 playing in the sun dappled waves,
 coiling around his thin, pale legs . . .

It was sudden:

 one misplaced step,
 a small tumble,
 an inopportunistly situated rock . . .

Jerico didn't scream or cry—just pulled Father out of the water, rested him on the creek bed, curled up on his still-warm chest, and fell asleep.

Two years later, when he was ten, the family dog was flattened under a tractor. A year after that, liquor guided Grandfather into a stroke. When he was twenty, Jerico's first boyfriend, André, succumbed to lung cancer. Three months later, Jerico saved two teenagers from a cave-in,

guiding them out with the corpse of their sherpa draped across his back.

So, Jerico knows death. Its stillness. Its peace. Its weight. When he carries bodies from the unforgiving planet, he carries Father out of the water with them.

The tourists are dead—the cave tells him as much—but they have a ways to go. EMTs pulled Father from the muck and, days later, the earth swallowed him miles away from where his heart had last pulsed. The tourists are dead, but their blood pumps. The tourists are dead, but there is work to do first.

Maybe Jerico's dead too.

Caius Buran is a McNair scholar pursuing a bachelor of arts in English and certificates in creative writing and classical studies at the University of North Dakota. His free time is spent starring on and creating for *9mm Retirement Radio*, an actual-play podcast, and doting on his dog, two cats, and ball python.

The Light

Edward Tortorelli

For as long as they could remember, they had a light. Not a very bright light. In fact, one might argue it was fairly dim, but it was a light, and it was theirs. That light followed them, kept them company. Maybe it wouldn't illuminate every corner, but they could see themselves and that was good enough for them. Then one day their light changed. It glowed so brightly they had to look away, the shine nearly blinding. They couldn't understand it and the intensity didn't falter. For a while they couldn't see a thing, the light too glaring and their senses overwhelmed, but slowly they adjusted to see again. They hesitated at first, not trusting this new vibrancy, why would they when nothing had been this bright before. Something new and unfamiliar and overwhelming and strangely becoming pleasant. While they could see just fine before they now noticed things previously shadowed, a vibrancy they never knew was masked by shades of grey, and a warmth that made them realize things were cold in the first place. They learned to like this new light. What started as too much became comforting and just right. It was a new normal, one they hadn't realized they were missing until now, but now knew that this was the thing they had hoped for deep down in the dim.

Then the light went out.

Almost just as quickly as it appeared the light was now gone, and they could no longer see. It was hard to tell if the light was back to what it was or out entirely, after being in brightness for so long they couldn't tell the difference anymore. Everything was shadow and the cold felt like an ache and the light didn't return. They thought it may have been an accident, something temporary that would fix itself because how could they learn to go back to dim and darkness after being given something so brilliant? Why show them the light at all if it was just to be taken away again? What unfair test is this? The light didn't return. The longer they spent wishing and hoping the more resigned they became, and the light didn't return. They stayed still for quite a while, staring off into the darkness and wondering why the light didn't return. Maybe it was something they said or did, a mistake they didn't fix or a problem they didn't face. A fault in character, a misstep, or maybe even a curse they couldn't shake. These thoughts lingered, spiraling into a web that never seemed to hold any answers. A pain settled, one that felt bigger than just a little darkness, something that made them long for the past, for when they had what was theirs and didn't long for more. A pain that made them realize that the hope brought to light was now encased in darkness that felt far colder than it had before it was unearthed. They sat, they paced, they cried, they yelled, they laid around for days.

And the light still didn't return.

Slowly, ever so slowly, they began to reach out, feeling into the darkness and started to move again. They found they remembered the room even without sight and moving by touch, while unknown, was not nearly as hard as sitting still. They fumbled, sure, it was only inevitable, and sometimes that fumbling seemed to bring in a darker darkness, but they kept going and they fumbled less and less. As time went by, they began to notice shapes, outlines of things they had seen before, a soft glow forming within the light. This wasn't the light from before, no, but it was a light.

And it was theirs.

Edward Anthony Tortorelli is a current student studying sociology as well as too many STEM subjects. He loves a good book, traveling, and spending time with his pets Moose, Mochi, and Tofu.

The Beloved Coat

Robert Moore, Jr.

Simon walked into class with his eyes down and shoulders slumped. He tried to attract as little attention as possible. He was successful, as several students jostled him as they rushed through the door. It was a perfectly normal day for him.

As he walked to his desk in the back corner, he glanced up. He couldn't help looking at Maebh O'Brien. He knew that she was from Ireland and that her name was pronounced "Mave." She was in all his classes, which wasn't surprising since they had the same major. He also thought that she was beautiful.

She had a round face and blue eyes the color of the sea. Her most striking feature was her hair, though. She wore it long, and it was a dark bronze color with gray blotches scattered throughout. The spots had to be dyed, of course. He couldn't imagine how she managed that, but no one's hair grew that way—blotched—naturally. However she did it, it was a nice effect, and he found it fascinating. All the more so because it matched the color of her coat. A coat that she always carried with her, even during the summer.

As beautiful and interesting as he thought she was, he never spoke to her. But then, Simon rarely spoke to anyone. He turned his attention back to the floor.

He took another step toward his seat but stopped. Maebh's coat

was on the floor. She was talking with her lab partner and hadn't noticed. Simon knew the coat must be special to her, and if it stayed on the floor, someone would step on it and dirty it, or worse, so he walked over and picked it up.

The moment his hand touched the coat, Maebh stopped what she was saying mid-word and turned toward him. Her blue eyes were wide and her mouth gaped. Blushing and self-conscious now, Simon held out the coat to her.

"Sorry to interrupt, but your coat was on the floor," he started to say more but just muttered incoherently instead.

Maebh stared at him a few seconds longer, but finally smiled and timidly reached out to take the coat from him. "Thank you."

Simon nodded and tried to smile back, but his cheeks flamed, and he couldn't think of anything to say. Instead, he lowered his eyes, turned, and slunk to his seat.

For the rest of class, Maebh ramped up Simon's normal level of anxiety. Any time he glanced at her, she was looking at him and smiling.

Why is she doing that? She's never even noticed me before.

His thoughts were in turmoil.

When class was over, Simon waited for everyone to file out like he always did. This time, however, Maebh waited too and walked out with him.

"I wanted to thank you again for rescuing my coat."

He should say something in return. He knew that, but instead Simon only mumbled under his breath and increased his pace. Maebh kept up.

"Have you gotten the latest problem in Data Analysis to plot right? I'm having trouble with the curve fit." Her eyes were wide, and she edged closer to him as they walked.

It was a clear opening for him to offer to help. Even Simon recognized that. "I just used a moving point average." Simon's voice was barely above a whisper. He might recognize it as an opening to offer help, but he still couldn't believe she'd be asking him.

"Do you think you could—"

They'd reached their next class, and Simon rushed through the door and to his seat in the back. He saw Maebh's eyes widen, and her hard swallow, but he didn't turn back. She was still standing there when he reached his seat, and he tried not to notice how her shoulders

drooped as she shuffled to her own seat.

From there, this class went much as the previous one had. When Simon stole a glance her way, Maebh would perk up and smile at him. It fed his anxiety, and she was so distracted that the class got a lecture about paying attention. The whole affair made Simon more self-conscious, but it was the last class of the day. When they were dismissed, Simon snatched up his things and left. His departure was quick enough that, for once, he jostled others out of his way.

The next day didn't help Simon's nerves. In all their classes, Maebh moved to a seat near him. At lunch, he went out of his way to find a hidden corner and, after a few minutes, she was there.

"May I sit with you?" She was still smiling, though she looked timid this time.

For Simon it was too much. Flustered and upset, he said nothing. Instead, he started slamming his things into his backpack. Maebh's eyes widened and she reached out to touch his arm, but jerked her hand back before she did.

"Simon, please don't go."

He stopped mid-motion and gave her a quick glance.

"Look, I'm sorry if I've made you nervous, but I really do need help with that problem in Analysis. Please help me?"

He stared at her for a moment, never letting his eyes meet hers, before he sighed and started unpacking. "Sure, Maebh, I'll help if I can. Sorry I was being rude," he sat back down and mustered a smile. "Where's your algorithm? I'd ask to see your code, but if Dr. Wilkerson sees our programs being too similar, we'll both fail."

Simon fidgeted and looked everywhere other than at Maebh, but he stayed. Now there was a reason for her being there. More importantly, there was a reason he could accept.

Their meetings after that became a regular thing. At first the excuse of studying or working on projects was needed to calm Simon's nerves. It took a while for him to accept that Maebh liked his company. He twitched less and would look at her as time went on, but he still wouldn't meet her eyes. If it happened by accident, he'd blush and jerk his head away. It was finals week before she made him panic again.

"Would you like to come to my place for dinner tonight?" Simon's eyes widened and Maebh hurried on, "I mean we could keep studying, right? We do have fluid dynamics the day after tomorrow."

Simon took a deep breath before he replied, "Uh . . . sure. I guess. Are you sure?" His shoulders hunched and he curled in on himself. He thought about it, though, and realized he'd come to enjoy her company over the past few weeks, so he stamped down his distress and straightened. "Yes, I'd like that a lot," he managed to sound confident about it.

Now Maebh slumped as her tense shoulders relaxed. "Good. I've been wanting to ask you, but was afraid to." She smiled wanly. "It's just I really do need some help with taxonomy and fluid dynamics . . . and it just gets lonely in the house by myself." She blushed and fumbled for a piece of paper. She hastily wrote her address and handed it to him. She gathered her things and said, "Come by about six, okay?" Then she was walking away.

It's like she thinks I might change my mind, Simon thought as he watched her. I know what it's like to be alone all the time, though.

When Simon arrived at her address, he added "rich" to the things he knew about Maebh. The house was a beach house, small and single storied, with plenty of large windows and lined with trimmed hedges. He lingered in the driveway after his arrival.

Did she give me the right address? Is this a joke? Can she really be living in a place like this alone? His thoughts raced before he finally took hold of what little courage he had and went to the door.

Maebh answered the door after he rang the bell. Unsurprisingly, she made him feel uncomfortable. Where he'd come dressed in casual jeans and a t-shirt, she was wearing a white skirt and gray sweater. It's not that she was dressed up, but she certainly looked nicer than he did. To his thinking, she'd dressed for a date, which made him feel drabbier and even more out of place.

"Hi, you look great." He didn't know why he'd said that, even if it was true. He cleared his throat, "I wasn't sure this was the right place. Let me get my stuff. Oh! And I brought some chips and soda, since we're studying and all." It came out in a rush before she could say anything, and he walked back to his car. Maebh walked with him.

"It's okay. I forgot to ask you to bring anything. My parents make sure I have everything I need anyway." She hesitated for a second, then said, "And thank you."

"Thank you? For wha . . . Oh!" Simon's brain caught up and he realized he'd complimented her. He turned away and, though he was blushing, smiled. After gathering his things, they went inside.

"I hope you like sushi," Maebh said. "I should have asked, but it's one of my favorite things, and I didn't think you'd mind." She gave him a quick look to gauge his reaction.

Simon wasn't paying full attention. He was looking around as he set his books down. The back of the house looked out on the ocean through large picture windows. There was a floating dock jutting out from the beach, and a small sailboat was tied to it. The house itself was furnished with a white sectional and gray patterned rugs. The effect reminded him of a stormy sea. The scent enhanced this idea with a spicy, driftwood aroma.

Maebh was opening her mouth to repeat what she'd said when Simon shook himself, "Oh, I like sushi. It's fine. You know how to make it yourself?"

Maebh nodded. "Yep. Like I said, it's one of my favorite things, so I've learned how to buy the right kinds of fish and prepare it," she paused and gave him a grin. "Would you like to help?"

"Sure, if you think I won't get in the way," Simon said. "I've never done much cooking and definitely not something as complicated as sushi. I might mess it all up."

"It's not that complicated. You'll do fine. I'll show you."

They laughed and worked at preparing their supper, talking about their classes and the professors. The atmosphere was convivial and relaxed enough that Simon didn't notice Maebh brushing against him or her hand touching his at every opportunity. When everything was ready, they moved into the living room.

"I'm thinking of going closer to home when I graduate," Maebh said as they settled on the sectional. "So maybe I'll apply for grad school at Cambridge, Oxford, or Edinburgh," she laughed. "Of course, that's assuming I can even get into one of those universities, or other plans don't come up." Her eyes tried to find Simon's, but he was as elusive in that regard as ever.

"It sounds like we have similar plans then, though I'm thinking of staying somewhere on the Pacific Coast." Simon gave a nod. "I might try something other than grad school too."

Maebh scooted a little closer to Simon. "Oh? Like what? What could tear you away from the glamor of oceanic studies," she said it in a mocking, humorous tone, and they both laughed. She edged closer.

"I don't know. I'd thought of applying as crew for one of the re-

search ships for a year or two," Simon shrugged. "Which, I guess, means I'm not planning on getting away from all the glamor after all. I understand they're hard to get on though, so maybe that'll have to be after I go to grad school."

"Well, let me know what you decide, and I'll join you," Maebh's voice lost all its teasing.

Simon chuckled and said, "I'll let you know, but why would you do that? You just said you wanted to go closer to home."

It was then that he noticed that her leg was pressed against his and their shoulders touched. He cleared his throat softly and shifted away a bit. He didn't know what to think, he didn't know how he should act. Could she really mean it? Would she really follow him around the world? Was she really meaning to sit that close to him?

"Yes, but I want to be with you." Maebh's eyes finally captured his. "Besides, that's what I should do since we'll be married."

Simon's smile collapsed.

What? What did she say?

He stared at her before giving a nervous laugh. "You're kidding, right?"

Maebh brought a hand up to her mouth, but it couldn't hide the hurt expression or take back what she'd said. She schooled her features and lowered her hand. Her smile returned. "No, I wasn't. Don't people get married anymore?"

He stiffened. She's serious.

Simon jumped to his feet. "I . . . I should go." He rushed to his backpack, snatched it up, and started flinging his books and things into it.

"Wait!" Maebh's voice was a panicked wail. She reached out to touch his arm, but drew her hand back when he flinched.

"You can't just say something like that, Maebh." Simon said, his voice shaky, but he stood still. The pain in her voice had chilled some of his panic.

"Oh, Simon, I'm sorry, but I couldn't help it," she said, her head dropping and her shoulders slumping. "I'll die without you now."

Simon took two steps toward the door before turning back. "You can't just say things like that, Maebh. Do you know how crazy it sounds? We've only just started hanging out." By now he was shouting. The panic was rising again.

She didn't look up at him, but Maebh nodded.

"I know. I know it sounds crazy, but it's true." She looked up at him with tears in her eyes. "You gave me my coat. I can't help it."

"Gave you your coat? It's a nice coat. I didn't want someone stepping on it and messing it up." He paused and took a deep breath. He didn't mention that he also knew how much it meant to her. "You're just sounding crazy right now," He said, the panic starting to edge into his voice again, making it sharp and shrill.

Maebh stared back at him. When she spoke again, her voice was a whisper, "You don't understand."

"No, I don't understand. What am I supposed to understand?"

She wiped away her tears. "Will you trust me for a moment?"

Simon thought for a few seconds, then sighed, and nodded. "Sure."

"Then come with me out back . . . to the dock." She stood up and held out a hand to him.

He licked his lips. "Sure, I'll come with you. Just no more talk about getting married, okay?" Even after saying that, it was a few seconds before he took her hand.

She led him around the couch and to the back door. There she dropped his hand and took her coat from a hook. A chilly wind blew in from the ocean when she opened the door, but she didn't put the coat on. She just started walking toward the dock.

"Simon, do you know what a selkie is?" She didn't turn around to look at him.

"Uh . . . Aren't they half-woman, half-fish creatures that lure sailors to their deaths." Simon looked confused as he followed along behind her.

Maebh actually laughed at that—a short bark of sound.

"No, you're thinking of sirens and mermaids. A selkie is something else." She stopped at the end of the dock and turned to face him. "A selkie is someone who can change between a seal and a human by putting on or taking off their coat."

Simon just stared at her. "Okay, are you trying to tell me you can change into a seal? Are you going to try and drown me?" He couldn't help it, his tone was mocking.

"No, Simon, I'm not going to drown you." She looked and sounded exasperated, but continued her explanation. "If a non-selkie of the

opposite sex gets hold of a selkie's coat, and then returns it of their own accord, the selkie is forced to love them. It's part of their magic. If that person ever leaves them, the selkie sickens and dies." She held out her coat to him. "I'm a selkie, Simon. You gave me my coat."

Without really thinking about it, Simon took the coat. It kept him from leaving, and despite the crazy things she was saying, he found he didn't want to leave, even if "insane" was yet another trait he could assign to Maebh. He just couldn't leave her, so he stood there, holding the coat for her, expecting her to put it on against the evening's chill.

Instead, she took a step back and took off her shoes. Before Simon could say or do anything, she pulled her sweater off. She was naked beneath, which sent Simon into a stammering, stuttering fit.

"Maebh!" He turned away.

She didn't say anything, just added her skirt to the sweater on the dock.

Once naked, Maebh stepped toward him, turned, and shrugged into her coat. Simon didn't turn around until he heard the splash when she jumped into the water.

"Maebh!" Simon's voice was a shriek. He jumped to the edge of the dock and flopped onto his stomach. He reached down into the cold water and flailed about, trying to catch onto her, "Maebh!" How long did it take for a heavy coat like that to become waterlogged?

He brought his arms up to push himself up so he could dive into the water after her. That's when he found himself nose-to-nose with a seal. He stopped instantly and the seal gave him a kiss.

With a startled cry, he pushed himself backward onto his heels. The seal watched him, then ducked beneath the water before propelling itself onto the dock.

Simon noticed that the seal's fur was dark bronze...with gray blotches. Just like Maebh's hair. Just like her coat.

"Maebh?"

The seal watched him for a few seconds, then slowly crept its way to him. When it reached him, the seal hesitated, then flipped onto its back, placed its head against one of his legs, and looked up at him.

It was his turn to hesitate. Slowly, he reached down and stroked his fingers across the seal's soft belly. His thoughts scattered, but he knew this was Maebh. She really could turn into a seal, which meant everything else she said could be true too.

He looked down into the seal's eyes as his fingers continued to stroke her belly. A smile slowly curved his lips.

"You lied, Maebh. You have drowned me." He stared into her eyes; eyes as blue as the sea.

Robert Moore, Jr., is the lab manager for the Department of Physics & Astrophysics. He's also a student pursuing a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. In his limited spare time, he writes, considering himself a storyteller and hoping others will join him around the fire and share a tale.

*art &
photography*

Mushroom Cloud

Gabby Park

Artist's Statement

I was inspired by the beauty of UND's campus during winter, especially at sunset. I think that the buildings and nature of our campus really shine when it's cold out and there is snow on the ground. I often photograph the sky, I think it's to remind myself and others that life is random and beautiful if we sometimes stop to enjoy it.



Gabby Park is a senior at UND, working on her bachelor's in English, with a certificate in creative writing and a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. She is currently interning with *North Dakota Quarterly* and on the Adelphi board. She enjoys baking, drawing, reading, writing, and playing video games in her free time; currently, she is creating a video game of her own with her friends. She hopes to soon rescue a dog with her fiancé, and maybe even a cat.

Two Photos

Ahna Mosley

Artist's Statement

These photos show pops of color in our world, when it often feels everything is black and white.

Dining in Green



Tea Party



Ahna Mosley is a criminal justice major who enjoys photography and writing. She hopes people will enjoy the photos she has taken and edited.

Three Artworks

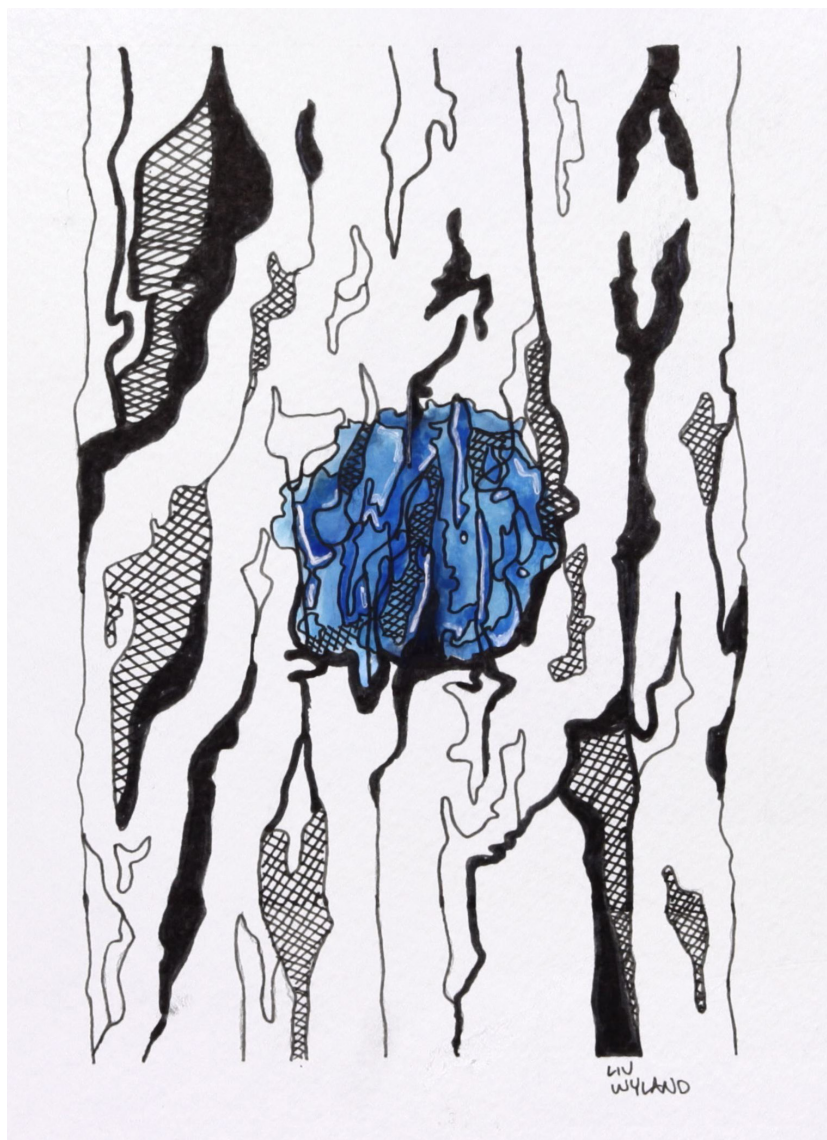
Liv Wyland

Artist's Statement

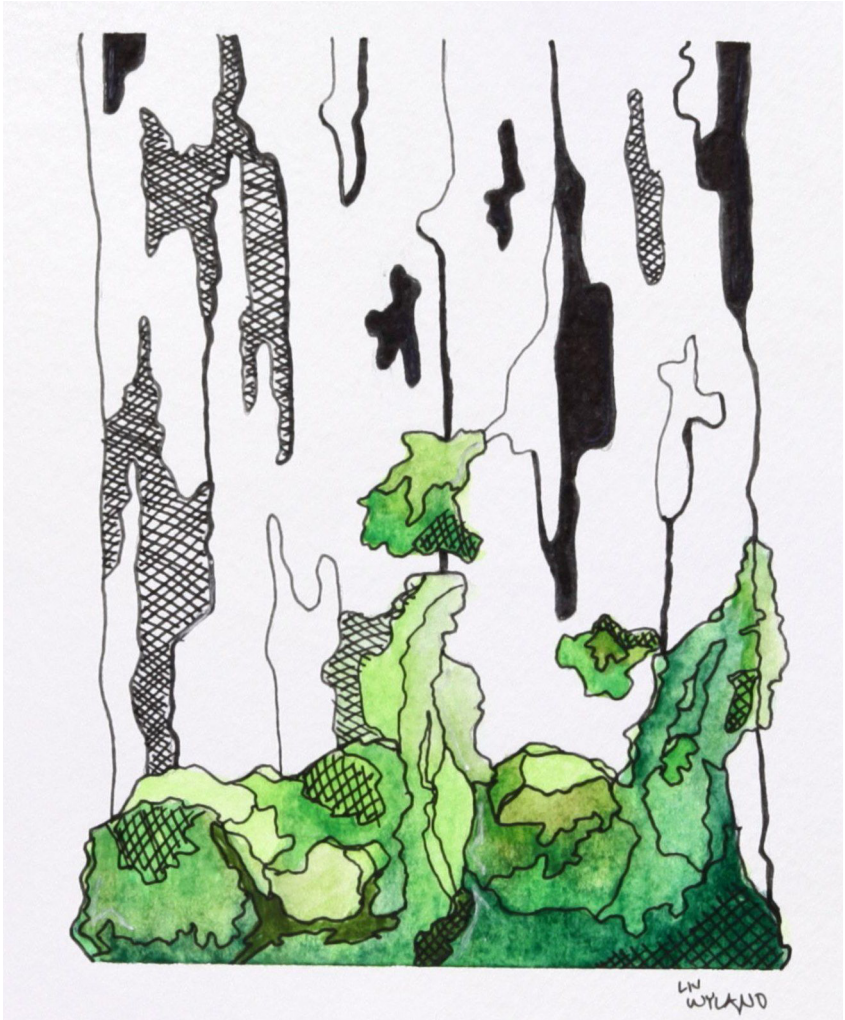
This collection of art was inspired on my backpacking trip in the Porcupine Mountains in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. While I was on this five-day hike, I was able to experience the natural world around me and sketch what I saw. I have a deep love for Northern Minnesota, the North Shore, and Lake Superior so being on the south side of the lake was a whole new and amazing experience. Through these three pieces of art that I have recreated, I hope to encapsulate some of what I saw, including "The Blue Dot," which was placed on the trees and marked our path through the woods and along the shore. This blue dot was a beacon when the road became treacherous and always was there to guide us through the thick of the woods. "The Green Moss" was inspired by the moss-covered trees which blanketed the mountains with their soft green glow. The moss ever trying to live in a symbiotic relationship with the tree. And lastly, contrasting the moss, "The Orange Mushroom" was inspired by a bright orange and yellow mushroom which grew right in the middle of a tree. The watercolor is meant to emphasize the impact these scenes in nature can have on a person. They are all tied together

with the base layer of the tree which is the same across all pieces. I hope that these pieces of art will give insight on the natural world around us and urge people to slow down from their busy days to notice color and the beauty that can be found in nature.

The Blue Dot



The Green Moss



The Orange Mushroom



Liv Wyland is a senior at the UND majoring in commercial aviation with a specialization in aviation safety and minoring in women and gender studies. When they aren't flying, they enjoy sketching the world around them, backpacking adventures, cooking and eating good food, and blasting music with the car windows down.

Two Photos

Jonathan Sladko

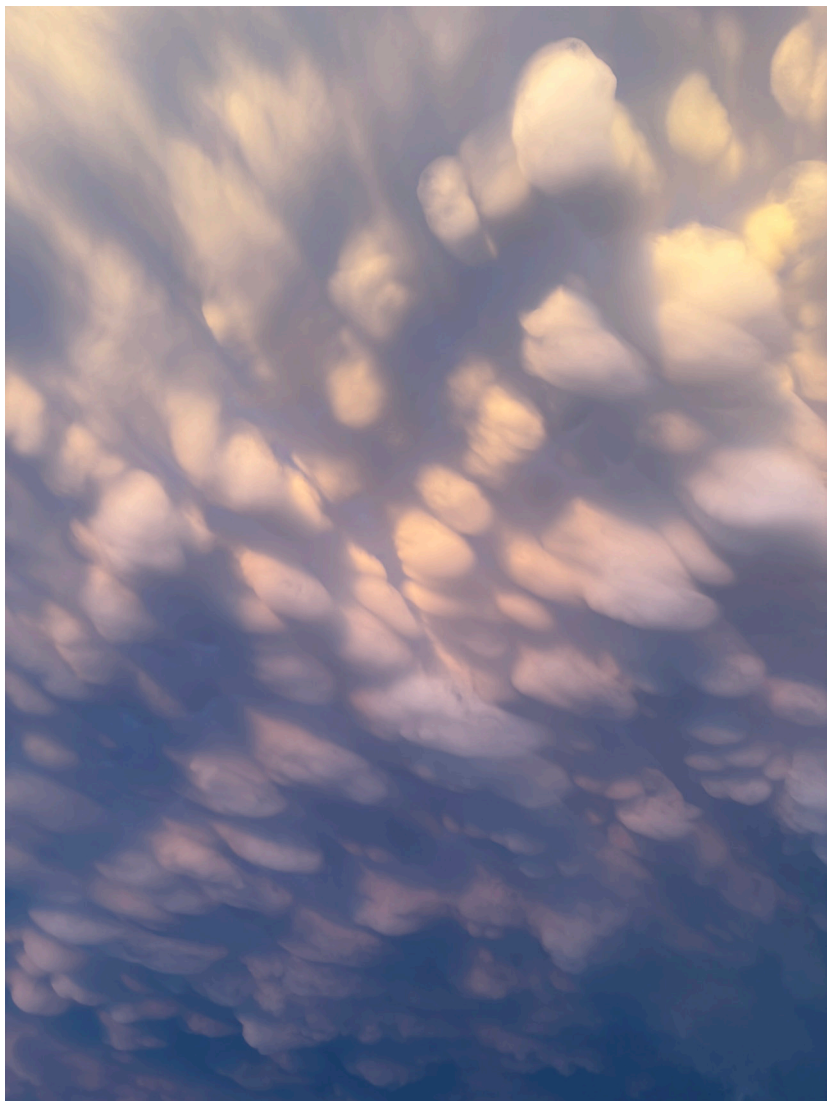
Artist's Statement

In the summer of 2025 I had the opportunity to take ATSC 320, a two-week intensive storm chasing experience class. I learned how to forecast thunderstorms and tornados, and how to safely approach them, maintain my distance, and take photographs.

"Mammatus" was taken in Texas, looking at the underside of a thunderstorm anvil. Supercooled pockets of moist air sink through the anvil of the supercell, creating a bubbly look. The term 'mammatus' comes from the mammalian mammary glands, because of the resemblance some people attribute to the cloud formation.

"Supercell over Rolla, ND" was taken near Rugby, looking northwest at a supercell building up over Rolla. The cumulonimbus clouds can be seen clearly bubbling up into an anvil, the mushroom cloud shape that supercells take on as they mature.

Mammatus



Supercell over Rolla, ND



Jonathan Sladko is a writer, photographer, pilot, and storm chaser. Originally from Alaska, he has spent the last five years at UND studying English literature, aviation, and atmospheric science.

In the Eyes of the Muses

Rachel Held

Artist's Statement

I love images that are simple at first glance, but once you look a bit more, you start to see minor details that can define the photo. I feel like that is exactly how to describe myself! My goal for this photo was: it has to be free of people as I want the focus to be on the nature or creation that spoke to me in that moment. I like to view the world in a similar way to my photos. It may look simple, but when you look deeper, you find a whole new meaning to grab onto.



Rachel Held is a sophomore at the University of North Dakota majoring in English and minoring in journalism. She hopes to be a published novelist in her future. Rachel enjoys writing poetry along with journalistic stories and fiction. In her free time she enjoys reading thriller/mystery fiction and watching old movies, for example, *The Blob* (1958).

poetry

Alive

Zoe Wanner

What is it to
be Alive?
I am Alive.
At times more than I thrive.
Like a thrilling dive.
springing,
sliding.
The smell of pine
the brush of dry grass
Diving into the deep, terrifyingly beautiful unknown.
Like the sting of alcohol on open wounds,
stirring,
searing.
A jolt of living
the brush of mortality
I leap
and bound through every day.
Jittering joy,
courses, pulses, energizes my veins.

Dive into the deep,
recklessly exciting unknown.
Like the exhilaration,
Like the exhilaration
of sprinting down a mountain,
swerving,
in my lungs,
on my shins.
spurring,
in my veins,
at my fingers.

What is it to be capital-A Alive?
Why am I Alive?
Because who else would leap and bound?

Zoe Wanner is a transfer student from Bismarck State College, in her junior year of chemical engineering. She grew up in Boise, Idaho, with a love of poetry, painting, and every art in between. she loves to read in her free time, and spend time playing board games with friends.

The Web

Robert Moore, Jr.

The interconnection of things: a sticky trail leading from one thing to the next, but meeting another thing as you pass through. And do you go after that trail to yet another node? Another thing that connects to still more? Each one casting its net, catching you tight, a linked system weaving its way, penetrating everything, connecting it to everything. A glistening series of strands gathering dew and making you wonder where the connections came from, and where they will take you. How is the sonar system on a submarine like a rock? Waves, like sound, move back and forth, squeezing and applying pressure, which can generate electricity, to power a circuit. This is called the piezoelectric effect. Quartz is piezoelectric. An eclectic way of looking at the world and piecing it together. Pieces that seem to be alone, but thread through to everything else. Dew drops glistening on a summer day, catching the sunlight and flashing it back. See how it works? And in the middle of it all is the spider, waiting to catch you if you get too wrapped up in the web, caught in its beauty and complexity, itself a piece of the web: reaching out with its many legs to touch nodes in its own form of the pattern, and changing them as it goes, revealing new connections never seen before, revealed for the first time in an *ah-ha* moment as new connections flash blindingly over the horizon of what is known.

Robert Moore, Jr., is the lab manager for the Department of Physics & Astrophysics. He's also a student pursuing a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. In his limited spare time, he writes, considering himself a storyteller and hoping others will join him around the fire and share a tale.

Flower Seller

Robin Whittington

Some days I feel like a flower seller.
Someone comes in looking blue,
I offer them a violet, now they shine
like a sunny day, I feel a bit better.

But as more people come,
my stock runs low.
I'm getting worried,
"Will I make it through the day?"
But I don't let it show.

I offer my last roses to some young lovers,
the world seems more gray,
without that vibrant red.

I'm down to two flowers now.
My shop feels so empty,
but a young student walks in,
tears on their face, so I offer a flower
just to let them take.
They choose the one with bright orange petals.

It's their mother's favorite.
I smile as they leave, excited about the gift.

But now there's one flower left
to brighten my home.
I pack up to leave, but the doorbell rings.
There stands a young woman
barely awake.

She asks for a flower, for her mother's grave.
I look at the pure white flower in my hand,
then at the tears in her eyes.
I offer the flower, and she leaves.

My shop is empty now, the world all gray,
and I'm left wondering,
"Why did I give them all away?"

Robin Whittington is a genderfluid electrical engineering major who enjoys writing poetry to unwind. They also enjoy spending time with their wonderful partners, who end up becoming muses for some of their poetry.

Two Poems

Casey Fuller

MEGADETH

I just want to see it
in all its 12pt glory
bolded as the title
for everybody to see
the way I remember it
big M and big H
arching across a jewel case
covering the chrome
of a digital plastic circle
we used to call a cd
in all its dorkiness
the way I remember it
the cover art as a cartoon
of a badass scene
for a bored boy depicting
a shell of a bombed city
the air red with pollution

with a skeleton in a suit
leaning on a for sale sign
that looks like a gravestone
the way I remember it
hovering in my harmless
low grade nostalgia
in a world that would never
turn out that way.

The Way My Father Slept

He would sometimes fall asleep snoring
in front of the TV playing Solitaire
or below the bathroom sink next to
our thin ratty towels while wrenching
on some rusty pipe or under the trailer's
crawlspace in the dark. I knew how
to find him. I'd trace an orange or
yellow cord from the single outlet
in the shed following it to the big oval
cast by his shop light. Sometimes I thought
he'd left for good. Sometimes I thought
he'd died. Then I would nudge his shoulder
and tell him *hey I think it's time to go to bed*.
Not so he would sleep more soundly,
not to save him from soreness in the neck.
I wanted him to wake in a familiar room
with a window framing the woods,
with his work boots in his closet beside
his t-shirts and blue jeans and baseball hats.
I didn't want him to have to place himself
in a world he could no longer recognize,
so that his first sense was a struggle against
feeling lost, a fog that I knew would
carry him through the day.

When asked for a list of things he likes by his secret santa, **Casey Fuller** compiled this list: coffee, vintage Italian bike frames, and the night. He continues walking down his English PhD candidacy at UND like a veteran prizefighter, lumbering forward, chopping at the body.

Lipstick on a Pig

Rachel Held

My stomach is always full of dread
Envy is all I can feel.
I look at girls who are pretty,
And I think, why not me?
Maybe it's my curly hair that is frizzy
Or my arms that jiggle.
Maybe it's my thin lips
And my annoying voice.

I try to put on makeup,
but I can't hide it.
It's all I see and feel.
The one day I felt decent, I heard it.
Lipstick on a Pig.
I'd never heard that one before,
but I instantly knew what they meant.

Maybe if I don't eat
Maybe if I get new clothes
Maybe if I get different makeup
Maybe if I hide how I feel, no one will notice

Maybe one day I will be able to look at myself in the mirror.
I've been on a diet since I was ten years old
I've tried different clothes and styles
I've gotten different makeup
I've hidden how I feel
I'm still me.

All I feel is hunger.
All I want is to be pretty.
All I need is to be loved.
But who can love a pig?

I've tried everything.
I learned how to change myself.
I learned how to act like someone I'm not.
I did what I was told.

I put lipstick on a pig me.

Rachel Held is a sophomore at the University of North Dakota majoring in English and minoring in journalism. She hopes to be a published novelist in her future. Rachel enjoys writing poetry along with journalistic stories and fiction. In her free time she enjoys reading thriller/mystery fiction and watching old movies, for example, *The Blob* (1958).

Music Box Ballerina

Emily Forster

With the stirring of the cogs,
the dance begins anew.
A ballerina on a pedestal,
reaching for the sky,
her eyes just as blue.

A throbbing ache sinks deep into my body.
I can't go on much longer.

Her smile is perfectly content,
her arms delicately formed,
her posture molded and controlled,
and her legs—to metal they've transformed.

My legs feel heavy, immovable,
like they've turned to stone.
If I had wings, away I could have flown,
away from this world, the only one I've ever known,
and then maybe, possibly, I wouldn't be so alone.

My rusted joints move stiffly through the routine,
at the prompting of this wretched machine.
With a jolt lashing up my spine, it reminds me—
There's only one thing I'm allowed to be: happy.
Muscle memory is burned into my limbs,
subject to the machine's whims.
It dictates how my body will bend,
as I go through the motions to reach the end.
 Towards the sky my arms desperately extend,
 only to hear it played—hauntingly—once again.

All I know is the sound of that cursed note,
and the dance I once again start,
in this bleak world from which I cannot depart.

I speak not of the longing inside my mechanical heart,
 as repetition tears me apart.
 No time for rest, no time for anything except
 dissonant music ringing loudly in my ears.

As my muscles wither
 and
 decay,

the threads of who I am begin
 to
 fray.

The song corrodes the longer it plays,
 discord carved into the marrow of my bones.
 Again.
 Again.
 I taste the metallic tang of blood in my mouth,
as my heart beats in time—
 Again.

Emily Forster is an accounting major who writes in her free time. She enjoys reading sci-fi novels. When she's not reading or writing, she's training for her next triathlon.

Deadline

Jay Kupitz

Minutes until their last blink,
Blinks away from their last breath,
Breaths slowing to airy wisps,
An unknowing grade follows.

Jay Kupitz is a current student who fell into mechanical engineering as his major, with a minor in computer science. He's the proud coach to a U11 soccer team that scored thirty-eight goals in eight games, finishing the season 5-3. He finds motivation and inspiration from every person he meets, and he feels especially invigorated and carefree when bringing people together.

Three Poems

Audrey Tumberg

Grasping at a Fate Not Yet Held

Last night in muggy covers
I dreamt I touched your side.

While the fan was droning on in the corner,
my shaky hand found its way
two fingers below your last rib.

Soft to the smell,
 warm to the touch,
 real to the mind.

Last night in humid air,
I pictured you turning to me
through a lens of spotted starlight.

Smooth skin on wrinkled white linen.
Glinting auburn hair shifting on static filled pillowcases.

Muddy eyes finding my line of sight.

Easy on the eyes,
enticing to the heart,
enough for the hopeful.

Last night in a feverish sweat,
I felt you
right
there
on the tip of my tongue.

Your fingertips placing pressure on my palate.
My tastebuds forming around you.
My mouth trying to cradle your taste.
Your knuckles pressing down harder.

Cold enough to startle,
Waxy enough to feel like a figment,
Fictitious enough to snap glued eyes open.

Last night in a flushed moment of living open truth,
I called out your name.

I let it echo.

Stretched syllables stuttering,
crammed consonants catching.
Out of luck to spend.

Before | After

Before

Inches of thick sweet air between
Perfumed with swiveling scent of hesitancy
Heavy with the weight of need

Nose to nose sharp and soft
Close enough to see the light glint off the whites of your eyes
The bright flashes near enough to catch and release

Is there a way to use my pupils to tell you
I've been angling to play for keeps?

Hands patiently sifting through sandy features
Speckled freckles, soft lines, open pores

Hard pressed for air gasping
For the life of your breath in my open mouth

Sharp lines of teeth close enough to bite my own tongue for me
Honey coated words behind sealed lips
Drumming in my pulse droning in my jaw

Messy dripping words with the instinct to coat
The ridges of your spine and the rift of your top lip

After

Let me steady myself on the taste of your sweet skin
On burning lips fevers exchanged
Fire given by a sweet hand
My balance remade

Let me steady myself in the spaces in-between
Between sweaty palms
That have held delicate matters
Between cut up fingers
That have grazed warm flushed faces
My balance remade

Steady is the fuzzy light
Flickering outside both peripherals
Humming is the warm space between us
Telling are my own features made unfamiliar
How my mouth has changed
From your fingertips grazing it

How all the times
I've mulled your syllables over on my tongue
Render the peaks and valleys that trace my lips
To have the sharp lines and smooth flares
Of your name
Written all around them
Myself remade

Audrey Tumberg is a junior in the English program at UND. Audrey hopes to continue her passion of the literary scene through a career in editing and publishing. In her spare time, Audrey enjoys listening to music, people watching, and reading. You can often find Audrey downtown getting a cup of coffee and scribbling down new ideas for poems.

Bark: A Companion Piece

Caius Buran

*He shall be straight condemned of heresy
And on a pile of faggots burnt to death.*

—Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Scene 8, lines 184-184

Gregor Samsa's on his bed and I—
I am the blanket caught in the plates of his exoskeleton
He rolls in me, and I'm filth, I'm filth, I'm filth.

Frankenstein's son has lit a fire and I—
I am the flame that dances in the embers
He thrusts into me, and I'm foul, I'm foul, I'm foul.

Grendel stalks the hall of Heorot and I—
I am one of thirty thanes he devours
He splits me open, and it's futile
On his tongue, I die a thousand happy deaths
In his stomach, I fizzle.

Buran | Floodwall

*Along the gutters, shapeless, fagged,
With drooping head and bleeding feet, [. . .]
For, drunk or dead, the street's the bed
Where dogs and bums must sleep and die.*
—Arturo Giovannitti, "The Bum," lines 7-8, 23-24

Fondly, I kiss your snout. My whiskers tickle against your wet nose.

Soon, we will rise, and I will pour us each a bowl of kibble.
We will frolic in our fenced in backyard (not too loud),
And then you will head to work, and so will I.
We will pull on our human gloves,
Our human suits,
Our human masks,
And leave in separate cars.
In the evening, you will ask, like you always do,
Why I'm so scared, why we must hide
And I will not have an answer.

Thankfully, the alarm hasn't yet rung. We are in bed, and we are dogs together.

Caius Buran is a McNair scholar pursuing a bachelor of arts in English and certificates in creative writing and classical studies at the University of North Dakota. His free time is spent starring on and creating for *9mm Retirement Radio*, an actual-play podcast, and doting on his dog, two cats, and ball python.

Frazier Park

Josephina Wieczorek-Bettendorf

I.

My father set up canvases
We would paint side by side;
Our pictures exhibited
The varied brush lines of a
Nine-year-old girl
And a forty-year-old drunk,
I guess

I don't really paint since he died.

But his paintings were all strokes of light,
Of night,
A skull, or some acrylic body:

(The Moon)

My paintings were all failures
from unreachable ideals;
I could never color inside

The lines
That nine-year-old's mind
Kept tracing

I found my thoughts in graphite,
But my painting once hung on his wall.

It doesn't matter—
I write now;
My father did too
It's one of few things we both did the same,
I guess

I found a poem about me
In a stack on his shelf;
(When he died, and
we dug through the house.)
His love was in Arial
On some dust-covered page
Someday,
Maybe, I'll get it tattooed

To remind me he loved me, on some night
He knew,
With a beer, and a desktop,

(And the Moon)

II.

"We are going camping," Father declared one night
To brother and me, in late fall
As we danced and fought in kitchen light
And turned our heads to his godlike call

I packed nothing but my pjs
And put my head between my knees in the backseat
At the creek, he lit a fire like always

And we sat like the lost boys,
And let the wild light bleed
All over

But it was cold for California and, then again,
A shivering lost girl has no honored name
Among smoky boys and smoking men;
I laid in the truck bed until the sun came

The next morning, brother and I shared the front seat,
Heat blasting
While father stirred in dewy tent;
My eyes were so heavy, consciousness unlasting

Father opened the door and declared,
Savior-bent,
"Let's go home, shivering children.
Whose idea was this, anyway?"

III.

"Do you remember
When we went to my father's house?"
It was emptyemptyempty
Of daughter and brother,
And Father;
It was full of all the (nothing)s that lonely men keep.

Do you remember?
We stood outside on the wooden deck,
The rail drove splinters into my hands,
I tried to remember
When I was small enough to sit on this rail
And, "You can see the whole town
from here."

And I cried.
"I remember," you say, "but I can't remember what you said."

Do you remember
The words that never came?
And if they could, would they?
If they would, what would they say?

*You did not know how those giant shirts
Did not stretch over his tummy
Or how he breathed&breathed&breathed
As he stared each night,
Thinking of all the everything(s) and (nothing)s
That lonely men keep*

You did not know the man in the graveyard.

But do you remember
My tears?
I need someone to know
That I cried.

Josephina Wieczorek-Bettendorf is a junior at the University of North Dakota, where she's studying English with certificates in classical languages and writing, editing, and publishing. She plans to pursue a PhD and become a professor of English. Josephina enjoys writing as a means of capturing personal memories and creating stories that will make a lasting impact on others. When she isn't writing, she enjoys reading, watching movies, and spending time with her husband Jonah and her cat, Sebastian.

Two Poems

Clara Anderson-Cameron

Big dog

Takes a couple bites at the sun
And goes home hungry
Guards the stoop like a broke down soldier
Sinks down to four knees and bleeds out the nose
One dry bone or two to swallow
And make use of
Big scary dog with a few teeth
That could do some real damage
And the rest that flake away against a well-aimed stone
Good dog knows his place
between the biters and the bitten
Knows his body's a shield
Knows his eyes some windows
Framed up nice
Sees into heaven
Sees a soft place for to rest

it comes in threes

I.

they're passing bites of grief down the table, I choke down what I can
 he died early this morning suffering other issues for
 several years
a fresh haircut for the occasion, a handful of mints, the small sounds of
 mourning
 a funeral January in New York
generations seated all in a row, my grandmother stares at her brother's
body made to ash
 memories of playing on the lumber piles down south of
 Becida
behind her eyes, the way the crown of his head smelled, behind her
 eyes, his eyes still
blink back, wet and alive
 I forgot to let you know Jean texted me Tuesday night
 you were still at
 my house I was going to let her know you can let her
 know

II.

death speaks every language, he's gone now but he was a boy some-
where far away from here,
barefoot in the green hills of Normandy
 we canoed out onto Turtle River Lake a fire on the water
 back on land
 a big bonfire sandwiches cocoa
we gather and use our French for him, he is there as I conjugate my
verbs with a stranger:
être (to be), aller (to go), he is behind my shoulder saying: "on y
va"
 was he present in the flames? a perfect way to send
 him off

many hands smooth over rough, woolen fabric, la ceinture fléchée, the
last time we might feel
him for now, his daughter smiles at me but it is not quite like her
smile before

I'd like to be there I will be there

III.

upon hearing the news, my father is five years old again and he is run-
ning across the dewy yard,
into the neighbor's bright, warm kitchen
*died in his sleep sometime during the night unwell
for quite some time*

you don't forget the ones who loved you, your body remembers the
press of their hand
*their daughter lives in Alberta I talked to her twice
on the phone*

is he young again, at the funeral table with potluck dishes sharing room
on his plate, as the food
sits like lead on the back of his tongue?
he loved him more than his own two children

there, the soft touch of something invisible, there, the assurance that
love lasts so long,
forever
our good friend died today

Clara Anderson-Cameron is a senior English student. The last four years have been spent surrounded by people who love words just as much as she does, and for that, she couldn't be more grateful.

Two Poems

Tabitha Lee

A Bar Visit with a Noisy Stranger

I.

"Smile, baby girl," he said

Everything is better when you are
A perfectly painted portrait
Of what we think happiness looks like
No exhaustion or depression to be seen

II.

"Smile. It looks good on you," he slurred out

Fake it 'til you make it, as you bring me a beer
It's what they all say when they see a "chick"
It's for the common good,
Since strength shows when I smile through it

III.

"But you have such a nice smile," he whined

Why am I forced to smile?

Why does everyone worry when I stop smiling?
Other emotions exist for me
Yet I smile wide for him

Something Is Stirring

There is no pain
Like standing in the hospital mirror
Seeing once more
Something so familiar
so sterile, so sad
Something that resembled
. . . 16-year-old you . . .

Tear-stained eyes
Pleading some kind of escape
Feeling so isolated
Feeling so scared
Feeling. . . lost, so fucking lost
With the hollow shell looking back
Somehow it is still
. . . *you there in the mirror* . . .

Bearing less marks
From the war you were in
That broken kid still fights on
In you, maybe it will be forever
Her 13 tiny deaths are written in red ink
Onto the bridge of your foot
Just wanting to be whole again
While being in similar green scrubs
. . . *As they wore after their almost 14th death* . . .

Tabitha Lee is a twenty-year-old genderfluid individual pursuing their bachelor's in English with certificates in creative writing and possibly in writing, editing, and publishing. He enjoys spending time with their cat and writing, enjoying time with their wonderful fiancées, and snuggling up with a good book.

On Brooding

Sarah Golden

After much consideration and rigorous testing, I have come to the conclusion that

It is sort of difficult to brood when you are an accountant.

For artists, of course, brooding comes quite naturally.

They can unleash their restlessness onto a canvas,

Or a sheet of paper,

Or perhaps a formless lump of clay,

Poking and prodding until the flame is

Tangible, visible to the naked eye.

Musicians can brood, quite easily I think.

Especially those with a knack for composition

Fervently scribbling stanzas and motifs

Until rewarded at last with something that sounds the way their passion feels:

Particularly dismal, or perhaps, even bordering on villainous.

Something that would make others question if

Perhaps you had indeed sold your soul to create such a piece.

Athletes can brood, though you may not have thought they could.

Repetition after repetition, set after set, day after day
Until the dull ache is the same both outside and in
Gnawing away with a hunger that matches their own stomach.
After all, the best way to fuel the fire of ferocity
Is with kindling made of brooding thoughts.

Poets, I believe, have the easiest time with brooding.
There is no better pastime suited to a poet
Than to brood about one thing or another
And then to try a million times to aptly put
Their findings to words.
Poe was certainly a brooder, and Dickinson especially
And Frost and all the other greats
Brooders, the lot of them.

Accountants, however, cannot brood.
If an accountant were particularly plagued by
That which is dark and dreary
I can hardly imagine him opening up
A spreadsheet file with which to vent his feelings
Perhaps he would create a macro filled with hatred
To execute only the most sadistic of code,
Or maybe, organize a database with malicious
Intent guiding his keystrokes.
Maybe he would create a chart or graph with an angry color scheme
All reds and blacks, and bold, large, angry fonts.

Or, perhaps, he would simply bottle it all up.
He would not open a spreadsheet.
He would continue about his day.
Silently smoldering.
Lying.
In wait.
Waiting until the late hours of the day
Or even the earliest hours of the morning
(the perfect time to brood).

And then

He would turn to art, to dance, to written word, to spoken verse, to
 song,
Whatever his choice of medium.
Crafting a work filled with (at least)
A days' worth of melancholy.
Perhaps even weeks, months, years,
All repressed until this singular moment
When that bottle is finally uncorked
Unleashed
And flows
Finally
Freely
Out

Sarah Golden is a junior majoring in accounting, with plans to pursue her master's of accountancy and CPA after graduation. In the rare instance where she isn't running from one of her many Dungeons & Dragons games to the next, she enjoys collecting uniquely shaped earrings, playing board games, and making her roommates' cat regret waking her up too early.

Two Poems

Gabby Park

The Making of a Poem

How does one write a poem?
Do you start with a line, a stanza, a rhyme?
Does it grow within them,
And spring forth when it's time?
Maybe it's like a dance,
Inspiration partnered with pen,
Paper conquered with its lance,
Telling stories of women and men.
Perhaps a poem must be sad,
Full of heartbreak and woe?
Exploring what makes life bad,
Is that all a poem can know?
Poems strange or simple, subtle or uncouth,
Expression in pen and word, their own personal truth.

Nothing Changes

Hospitals crumble.
Ash coating their mouths,
Smoking tears fall for gone friends.
10,000 missing, 70,000 buried under
The rubble left of the lives they once had.

The World calls out in anguish and fear
Voices crying, desperate to be heard.
The bombing fueled by “freedom”,
Consuming the victim’s homes,
Crushing families’ happiness,
Ceasing children’s hope.

Look at us,
An ocean away,
Innocents are murdered.
Their world stops, ours goes on;
We beg for peace that never comes.

Gabby Park is a senior at UND, working on her bachelor’s in English, with a certificate in creative writing and a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. She is currently interning with *North Dakota Quarterly* and on the Adelphi board. She enjoys baking, drawing, reading, writing, and playing video games in her free time; currently, she is creating a video game of her own with her friends. She hopes to soon rescue a dog with her fiancé, and maybe even a cat.

Diamonds and Dust

Jo Diana

Don't hum your songs, you'll wake the building,
It's breathing softly just nearby,
And on Saturday mornings, the guitar whispers
Filling sunlight with its quiet sigh.

All days are fleeting, says the quiet,
They'll pass you quickly, soft and sly.
On Thursday evenings, the play is arguing
While laughter curls where memories lie.

The echoes of our whispered secrets
Float between the shelves and golden air,
And even now, when the world turns distant,
I feel them in the magic still there.

Wander these halls with gentle footsteps
And find a place to rest awhile,
For I've been blessed, and I have decided
To live inside this magic, wild.

And sometimes this place feels like a long-lost friend,
A doorway back to days I knew,
Where childhood wonder bends the hours
And walls remember what is true.

She knows my thoughts without a whisper,
Like secret chords we both can hear.
Her laughter bends the air to starlight,
And leaves me shining through my tears.

There's one who moves through rooms like sunlight,
With colors bright and eyes that gleam,
She steadies storms with quiet courage,
Then sparks the air with a sudden dream.

Her voice can lift me through the silence,
Her laughter dances, fierce and free,
A keeper of the small enchantments
That still makes time feel kind to me.

But time will steal these beams and rafters,
The roof will bow, the songs will fade,
The paint will peel, the dust will gather,
The magic is lost in what we made.

Still, I return with quiet footsteps,
To find the child I used to be,
And though the building drifts to shadows,
Its heart keeps time and waits for me.

Jo Diana is an English major with a minor in journalism. Influenced by the storytelling and lyricism of 1960s folk music, particularly that of Bob Dylan, she writes with an emphasis on rhythm, voice, and emotion. Her work often explores how language shapes memory and meaning.

*art &
photography*

This Must Be the Place

Janie Marino

Artist's Statement

This digital collage acts as a visual analysis of the theme of home in David Byrne's diverse body of work. It examines and combines nearly 100 works from a career spanning half a century, including albums with Talking Heads, solo projects, and other musical collaborations; films in which Byrne was a subject, actor, or creator; books written by and about him; and various works of static visual art. In addition to analyzing, this project also visualizes Byrne's homey rhetoric and references through a combination of text and imagery—whether replicating or borrowing iconography to reinterpreting Byrne's source material abstractly and symbolically. The collage combines several media (original paintings, found imagery, text manipulation, etc.) to reflect the multimodal and amorphous nature of Byrne's methodology. Each section of the "house" is loosely inhabited by an individual Byrne project, but many scenarios necessitated blending and blurring elements. A variety of conflicting styles and contradictory details further indicate the unpredictable nature of Byrne's career. Lastly, through vibrant colors and playful dynamism, I hoped to convey Byrne's iconic spirit of humor and whimsy.



Janie Marino is an English Ph.D. student at UND who previously studied fine arts and graphic design at the Kansas City Art Institute and earned her M.A. in English at the University of Wyoming. Now she combines these disciplines, creating multimodal work that blends literary and visual art. Her academic interests include aestheticism, surrealism, avant-gardism, medieval art, and humor. Outside of school, she loves watching bad movies and reading good books. Her favorites include anything by Kurt Vonnegut, mystery novels, and nonfiction disaster narratives, particularly those featuring shipwrecks, survival cannibalism, and arctic exploration gone wrong.

Two Photos from *What Should Be Never Is*

Caius Buran

Artist's Statement

Art is, in simple terms, created work that elicits emotion. A museum sculpture filled with fetid water and waste, an empty shopping cart abandoned on a bike path, an open recliner near a parking lot, fading street art tucked behind a trash can in a rain-damp alley, and a shot taken a moment too late to capture a vivid streak of lightning—all of these images are dissatisfying to the desire for clean, sensical art that immortalises the idealized, the pleasing, and the comfortable. Photography is not synonymous with “picture perfect.” The emotion tackled in this collection, *What Should Be Never Is*, is disappointment.

Creature Comfort



The Promised Land



Caius Buran is a McNair scholar pursuing a bachelor of arts in English and certificates in creative writing and classical studies at the University of North Dakota. His free time is spent starring on and creating for *9mm Retirement Radio*, an actual-play podcast, and doting on his dog, two cats, and ball python.

Mabry Mill on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Robert Moore, Jr.



Artist's Statement

This photography comes from a sequence of images that reflects a journey across the United States.

Robert Moore, Jr., is the lab manager for the Department of Physics & Astrophysics. He's also a student pursuing a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. In his limited spare time, he writes, considering himself a storyteller and hoping others will join him around the fire and share a tale.

Two Photos

Rylee Lunnie

Artist's Statement

I took all these photos on my point and shoot travel camera while road tripping from Grand Forks to Glacier National Park this September. No matter how big or small of a trip I take, it is a guarantee that I will be unplugging from my phone and capturing the experience through my camera. There's a lot of excitement that comes with shooting on a small, simple camera like this. I never know how the photos will turn out or how the lighting will affect the exposure until I'm back home and uploading them to my computer. I think I'm more present in the moment when I pick my camera over my phone because I'm less worried about the quality of the picture and more excited about what I'll see next and how I'll capture it.

I live to travel and there are so many things on this Earth that I plan to see. I love photography because I can capture the places I've been and get inspiration for the places I still need to go. Pictures are never the same as experiencing the places I go, but they create their own sort of memories. When I look at the pictures I've taken on my digital camera, I'm teleported, not back to the place, but to how I was feeling when I

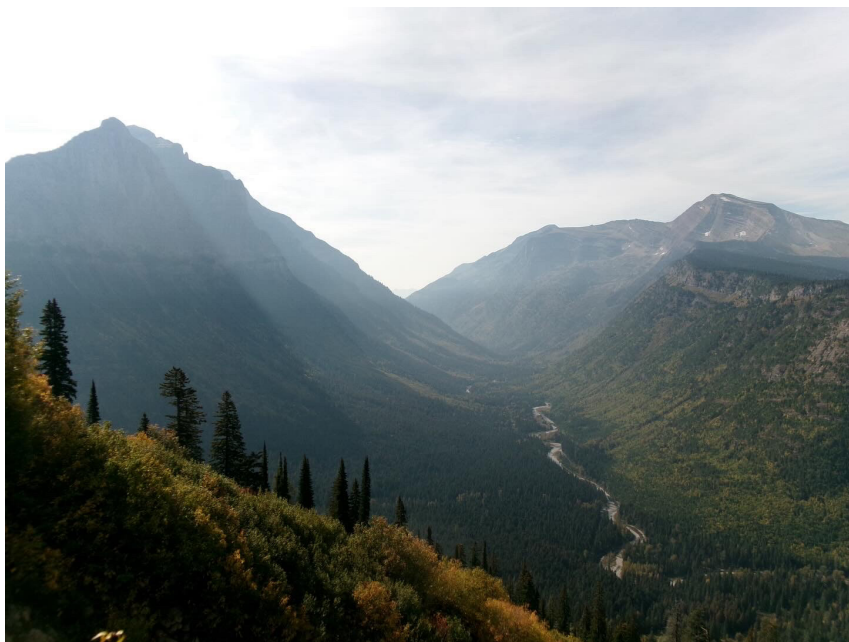
took the picture. One of the biggest reasons I love to travel, especially to the mountains, is not because of the view, but because of the experience of learning about a new place, trying something new, and learning something I never would've known otherwise. I hope when you look at these images, you're taken to a place that's new and exciting, and a place that you can find inspiration from.

Entrance to Eternity



I was in complete awe when I took this picture. There was a slight fog setting in and the mountains looked hazy at this distance, which reminded me of a Bob Ross painting. There were a few families around us, all sitting down watching the view while eating huckleberry ice cream, a Montana specialty. We had come from the other end of the lake, but it was almost like we were in a completely different world than we'd been an hour ago. Although there were more people around us, I noticed that everyone was hushed and sitting in silence, enjoying the moment rather than talking or walking around.

Glacier in September



This is personally my favorite picture. We were sitting on a short stone wall with our feet dangling about 50 feet from the ground, taking in the view. Looking down, we could see the winding trail that we took up and the fall foliage throughout the valley. Later, we would climb down to the river you can see and eat lunch on the rocky banks. Several groups passed us while we sat here but we didn't want to move. The sun was in the perfect spot, we were sheltered from the wind, and we didn't have to talk to understand how extraordinary the moment was.

Rylee Lunnie is a senior at UND studying philosophy and psychology. She wants to continue her education in counseling psychology so that she can combine her love of philosophy and psychology to help others in a meaningful way. She loves creating her own art through painting and photography, finding inspiration in the places she travels to. She hopes to one day publish her own book of some kind and include her own photographs, drawings, or paintings.

Four Photos

Mathias Klinke

Artist's Statement

My work is a collection of photos that I have taken within the past three months. I have always loved photography and capturing moments, but with adding my creative touch on the scene. My love for nature and travelling show in these pictures, as I have three pictures that were taken in Provence, a region in the south of France, as well as the beautiful landscapes and sunsets. I personally find that the photos from France are very representative of me, as Provence is a second home for me, and I have spent countless months there throughout my life, spending time with family, and exploring everything Provence has to offer. I hope to take many more photographs that speak to me and represent me.

Golden Hour in Provence



Power of Nature



UND Sunset Silhouette



Vieux Port at Twilight



Mathias Klinke is a freshman at the University of North Dakota who is majoring in commercial aviation. He is from Budd Lake, New Jersey, and attended Mount Olive High School. Besides being a pilot and his love for aviation, Mathias also loves sports, like soccer and football, as well as nature, and travelling the world.

nonfiction

Three Flash Essays

Josephina Wieczorek-Bettendorf

Lifelong

You are seven years old, and you are swimming in the pool. The water holds you in, and you break it apart; you take advantage of the reduced gravity and dance in its embrace.

Breathe in, float up;

Breathe out, sink down,

But there is someone watching you can you feel their eyes can you feel them watching? You keep

Floating up;

And down

Because there is no one there. Even if *you feel them, even if you feel their eyes and they are wearing black*, and you feel, all of a sudden, that you are drowning—the water holds you in and you cannot break it apart—there is no one there.

Can you still feel them?

You are eight years old, and it is time to sleep in your own bed. You like your brother's bed better. It is nice to sleep on the inside and press your

little footie pajamas against the cool drywall. If anyone comes in, you can melt into that grey paint, and *they* will probably see him first. *Why would you think that?* Your brother always falls asleep first. It does not matter now because “you are eight years old, and it is time to sleep in your own bed.” And you cry—keep crying. Let the polyester fill with so many senseless tears that you drown when you pull it over your face. *If the blanket is over your face, will you still feel them?*

You are nine years old, and you sleep in your own bed every night. Your mother tells you that if you just make yourself sleepy enough before bed, if you just let the sleep fall into you, you will fall into it, too. So, before bed, you read Judy Blume books, silly books, and you hope that the silly Judy Blume books will coax you into that sleepy swimming pool where the water holds you in and you can dance in its embrace. *But they hope so too.* You read sitting up in the center of the bed, not so far forward that *they could reach you from the door and not so far back that their fingers could crawl up the headboard and press eager palms around your neck.* You fall into a rhythm as you read to make sure that *they won't get you.* Set the metronome: you read a line, look back, look forward, and back down.

Read a line,
Look back,
Look forward,
And back down.

When your head twists, the lightbulb above you burns holes in your line of sight. You move quickly, each motion a breaststroke into the next, hoping that as you face one direction *the hands* do not come from the other, hoping that you can see *the hands* before *they see you.*

You are nine years old, and you sit in your parents' bedroom.

“What are you so afraid of?” your stepfather prods.

“They're waiting until I fall asleep, and then *they're going to get me.*”

He replies, “Maybe you're not that special.”

You are fourteen years old, and you sleep in the car for two nights. How many three-hundred-and-sixty-degree loops does it take to drive far, far away? Far, far away has nineteenth-century wooden pillars that creak above your living room air mattress. *How many upstairs footsteps does*

it take for old pillars to cave in, and where can you feel those eyes now? Are theirs the footsteps that make this downstairs ceiling creak? You would not be surprised.

Upstairs is where the mirror is, eventually. When you pass by, *those hands* curl around its edges and raise it in front of you everywhere you walk. You stare into *those eyes* and suddenly *they* are almost exactly like yours, but *their* color is one that you've always thought was so beautiful. You are fourteen years old, and *can you see them? Their bones protrude in every place that yours do not, and the marrow is made of daisy petals and cane sugar. They laugh more than you do; they stand straight and tall, so straight, and so tall that each vertebrae on your spine folds in bitter veneration.* You are fourteen years old, and you used to say that you could not see *the eyes* and *the hands* you always felt.

You are fourteen years old, and *you see them everywhere.*

You are eighteen years old, and you sleep in your own bed every night. You can hear your breath as your green blankets float up and down. Your roommate breathes right above you on her top bunk. You are alone enough to feel the quiet around you but not enough that you are drowning in it. You enjoy being alone, most of the time.

When you see *their eyes*, (*you still see them, don't you?*) *they* look much less like yours and much more like everybody else's.

They are the eyes of your mother when you're not who she wanted.

The eyes of your friends when you've just said too much.

The eyes of every person that's shown you a ruler on which every inch reads "fallen short."

The eyes of every person you've used that same ruler for.

You've gotten so used to *their eyes on you* that you've started to borrow *them* from time to time.

You are eighteen years old, and you are okay.

You are seven years old, and your mother asks you, "What are you so afraid of?"

You curl and flex your toes in your favorite little footie pajamas.

"Everything."

Dissection

When we were young enough to not know better, my brother and I would venture into our mother's herb garden and pluck juicy, green grubs from the tomato leaves. I imagine they felt safe there, soft and vulnerable, inching along the fuzzy pricks of each stem and feasting upon the greenery. The midsummer light fell lazily over each upward curve of the fragrant leaves. It was here that I learned how living things feel safe in beautiful places.

When we spotted the gluttonous beasts, we would skip away and rush up the ladder of our backyard "treehouse." Without a tree to be built around, the structure was more like a plywood fortress, somehow gothic despite being square and red. As we reached the top rung, lightning struck ominously around us, foreshadowing the menacing events to come. Inside the treehouse, there was a plastic bin. Inside the plastic bin, there were kitchen scissors hidden not long before—buried beneath broken Transformers, naked Barbies, and single socks that would never make it back to the washing machine. As one of us dug for the scissors, the other stretched the specimen across the floor so we might discover what color it bled. Surely a young Doctor Frankenstein, with his deathly curiosities and dreams of scientific stardom, did not always have a laboratory to conduct his revolutionary research. Surely all the greats began, in childhood, on some dusty wooden floor.

The main procedure moved quickly.

The worm was (not) placed under anesthesia. Its soft body was fastened by surgical straps (a child's index finger) to avoid any pesky movements. The incision changed each time: sometimes, a harsh, reckless chop where the scissor blades crashed together and the worm's body fell apart, and sometimes a professional glide across the abdomen. Once the patient's viscera were exposed, we documented our findings out loud, amidst various gags and groans of disgust.

We were diligent researchers—child scientists of the most prodigious degree. Still, I don't remember what color the worms bled. I remember our traipses through the garden. I remember the rusty blades of the kitchen scissors and how I could never remember which finger went in which hole on their handle. I remember the mutilation, but I cannot

remember what it meant. Did we find treasures or horrors beneath its thick, green skin? In the worm's stomach, could we spot the leaves of the tomatoes that my mother tried desperately to grow that year? When we threw the thing away, did it bleed green like the color of its skin, or did it bleed red like the four walls that confined it?

What color did the worms bleed,
And was it beautiful?

Portraits of Life Forgotten

The tragedy of life on Earth:

We are born, we depend; we are free, we depend; we die.

For a first job, working at a nursing home ranks far from the worst. It involves tasks that are easy to learn and difficult to unlearn. During evening shifts, the hours go by quickly, and many residents yawn too often to cause problems with the nurses or each other. New employees train for three days, learning names, memorizing drink orders, and discovering where each dish goes at the end of the night. These employees *should* be trained in the art of distance—not lingering long enough at any table to grow fond of any residents who may not be there the next evening. They should be trained to look away when the nurses feed those residents who cannot feed themselves, residents whose food the kitchen staff must blend into mushy gruel before it can meet their lips, residents who cannot even lift their heavy heads to accept the spoons that nurses offer them as imaginary airplanes. Even teaching their names seems like cruel malpractice—like allowing a child to name the bird that they found in the backyard and will return there within the week. Working here is an easy job for those who can learn not to notice. At my nursing home, I noticed this:

Out of all the residents, Sue reminded me most of the childhood we return to during our final steps on God's earth. She always sat at a table towards the back, with no salt, pepper, sugar, or centerpiece. Eventually, she lost her napkin privileges as well. These regulations may seem harsh, but the nurses withheld table-bound items for good reason—Sue took to these items as a dog takes to a pair of shoes. Many evenings I stood at my drink cart as exasperated CNAs foraged for bits of napkin in the vast, toothless cavern of Sue's mouth. Sue and her dentures were not as familiar with one another as you might imagine. They knew each other as intimately as third cousins at Easter brunch, united only by force or circumstance. At her barren back table, Sue would talk, and talk, and talk. She mumbled memories to herself, repeatedly piecing together Lincoln Logs of the past as if doing so would help her rebuild them into the life she once knew. She recounted scenes of shoe shopping and marital

spats as one explains a dream sleepy-eyed at the breakfast table. These once-vivid moments kept slipping away, and soon, no one else would remember them. Her listeners did not feel the significance of them as she once did; they did not long to slip back into sleep and continue the episodes after reality had let the credits roll.

Sue loved to sing. “Sing to me, Sue,” I would say on days when she seemed too quiet. She would laugh for a while, tell me about shoe-shopping, tell me about the “man in the corner” who talked to her always and exclusively, and then she would sing old hymns or “Jolene” by Dolly Parton in a bright, choral tone. Her voice flew up into the foam board ceilings and whizzed around the dining room, high and echoey with a shaky vibrato. When she finished her performance, an audience of nurses and aides would clap and chuckle. Sue would break out in a grand, all-too-gummy grin, to which the audience would reply in a more serious tone, “Sue! Put your teeth back in!” Then we would chuckle some more, and suddenly kitchen mistakes, lead eyelids, and feet on fire seemed farther away than they had at verse one.

JoJo possessed a confidence that many only dream of. Her full name was Joanne—as the nameplate on her door read for nurses, aides, and families who passed by. Even without this name tag, the door would remain irrefutably hers. It had bright yellow caution tape fastened thickly across the opening, and red foam pool noodles formed a trail to her bed. When the nurses woke her from napping or simply staring at the wall in front of her, they would take one arm and allow her to use the other, feeling for the objects dyed in vivid colors that she would never see. Long before she earned her squinty-eyed crow’s feet, JoJo’s father struck her skull with a steel-toed work boot and rendered her permanently blind. I often wonder who guided her before these nurses did.

In the morning, one of the nurses would dress JoJo and tie her sparse grey hair up with mini elastics—sometimes in little bunny ears, sometimes a braid or a ponytail with neon clips added for decoration. “You look so pretty, Miss JoJo!” I would say to her during mealtimes.

“*I know,*” she would shoot back with a tucked smile and eyes squeezed shut.

Until her brother, Wayne, died, JoJo always ordered the same two drinks. For my first several months at the nursing home, JoJo and Wayne sat together for every meal. I memorized their drinks easily: sugar-free lemonade and Kool-Aid for JoJo and black tea for Wayne. Wayne liked

his tea with two artificial powdery creamers and two even more artificial blue sweeteners. The day that Wayne passed away, I asked JoJo what she wanted to drink. She requested her usual drinks, but also Wayne's. For the remainder of my time there, the old man's legacy lived on in Great Value black tea: a bit watery, a bit milky, and artificial from foamy top to crumbly bottom.

After mealtimes, the nurses would often leave JoJo behind as I closed the kitchen. Sometimes, they had other residents to attend to; other times, they simply chatted behind their desk at the nurse's station while the old blind woman sat at an empty table, waiting for guidance from a gentle hand, and eventually, from her half crime-scene, half pool-party themed bedroom decor. As I wiped tables with sanitizer and swept half-eaten spaghetti noodles off the floor, JoJo would call out, "I want to go home."

"I know you do, Miss JoJo. I'll ask the nurses to come get you," I would reply. If I could, I would walk her myself, but they did not train dietary aides for the nurses' jobs. Often, even after I reminded them, the nurses would leave her a while longer as she repeated the request.

"I want to go home . . . I want to go home . . ." her words trailed at a volume that reached no farther than the empty tables around her. In JoJo's head, I imagine her voice sounded much bigger—commanding and confident, the tone of a woman who grew up guiding herself away from men with short tempers and steel-toed work boots. But in this dining room with its tile spaghetti floors and tables wet with sanitizer, it emerged small and pleading: a voice on its knees. It's difficult to yell when your voice is small and "home" is just a hospital bed.

Bill was a gentleman through and through. Many male residents had an explorer's gaze set perpetually within their clouded eyes. When I handed them drinks, I could feel them mapping territory on my dirty scrubs. I could feel the footsteps as they walked over my hands, my legs, and my torso, finally up to my face, my eyes . . . if they offered a compliment aloud, they did so in a lust-marinated tone that seeped into my skin and pushed it upwards in cold gooseflesh. Though their stares would linger as I walked away, I never stayed at the table quite long enough for them to plant any flags.

At Bill's table, I never felt scared to linger. When I brought him his requested treats every evening—green tea and vanilla ice cream—his eyes wrinkled up, his pupils came to life, and he smiled, not as a man

mapping out territory but as one happy to have you aboard his ship—like he had a friend to sail with. He wore a dark blue U.S. Navy ball cap and always carried a thick war novel with him to dinner. He always smiled and he always said, “thank you!” when I brought what he requested, as if I did so as a personal favor rather than for \$12.30 an hour. After a while, I seemed to forget that part, too.

Before I finished high school, I had an extra graduation invitation—the one that would have gone to my father if he hadn’t died a month before—and I brought it to work with me. During my rounds of meal charting, I stopped at Bill’s door with the slip of cardstock held at my side. He greeted me as he always did, with a “You’re here...” or “There you are!” I wish desperately that I could explain his voice in a worthy metaphor: words coated in brownie batter and sweet molasses, as gentle as moonlight in a dark room or dripping sunshine in early June. Truthfully, no metaphor can explain the voice of a grandfather. I returned the greeting as I always did, with a “Hi, Bill!” or a quiet smile, and I handed him the card. I do not remember anything more than a sweet “thank you” in return, but I do remember all the sweet “thank you’s” that followed in my next several shifts, as if he remembered the token all over again each time he saw me.

I returned to work once after starting college, sometime in November, and Bill was not there anymore.

The tragedy of life on Earth:

You train to remember, you remember; you train to forget, you remember.

Josephina Wieczorek-Bettendorf is a junior at the University of North Dakota, where she’s studying English with certificates in classical languages and writing, editing, and publishing. She plans to pursue a PhD and become a professor of English. Josephina enjoys writing as a means of capturing personal memories and creating stories that will make a lasting impact on others. When she isn’t writing, she enjoys reading, watching movies, and spending time with her husband Jonah and her cat, Sebastian.

How a Romantic Poet Moved On

Katelyn Bone

In the morning, as the alarms blare, a black void of a cat makes her dramatic entrance. With the swiftness of a shadow and the precision of a critic, she leaps onto the bed. Stomping with purpose—determined to silence the awful sound disturbing their shared slumber. Whether this is a natural instinct or a behavior she’s perfected to mock the poet, we’ll never know. As this poet groans into the morning, the walls shift in sympathy. They greet her with the soft reflection of the sun outside—never dull, never obstructed, always eager to remind her that the city of Grand Forks has already begun its day as it bathes her in golden rays.

This is around the time her friend, Zoe, gets off her first bakery shift. Appearing at the poet’s door with a freshly made bagel and, if she’s lucky, her favorite blackberry-white-mocha-latte. The walls turn a blind eye, pretending not to notice that Zoe isn’t on the lease, but with the way they stretch to accommodate her presence, they might as well add her name in the fine print. These mornings begin with Zoe’s usual debrief. Her voice bounces against the apartment’s edges as the poet groggily finds her way to the thrifted, dark green couch. Without hesitation, Zoe throws open the blinds, letting golden light flood in as she sets up her little pink mirror on the windowsill and paints her face for the day ahead. The walls stand as silent witnesses, soaking in their routines like sponges, storing away these moments for when they might need

them again.

Come night, as the poet returns home, the sunset casts warm brushstrokes across her apartment. The walls exhale, settling into the glow of another day's end as she lights a fresh incense stick and her favorite citrus candle, filling the space with calm once again. The music hums through the air, and she wonders—if her four walls could speak, what would they say?

Would they scold the poet for her choices in previous romantic pursuits? Would they let her vent about her choices in a roommate? Would they sigh knowingly, having already seen the cracks before she did?

She ponders if these four walls would catch her up on the philosophy books that have been collecting dust near her bedside. If her apartment reads them as she is off at school or work all day. If these four walls would enjoy a glass of her sweet red wine and watch over her cats. She imagines these walls softening their voices as they watch her come home from a long day. She imagines them painting themselves a burnt, sweet, sunset orange to ease her mind.

The scent of burning frankincense and citrus curl through the dim, smoky air. As it wraps itself around the room like an old friend's embrace, the walls hum with anticipation and music. With a tipsy, triumphant holler of "REDHEAD ENTERING," Zoe crashes through the poet's dusty kitchen door using the Menards-made spare key. The air barely has time to settle before she's sweeping through the kitchen, abandoning her muddy boots, floating past the bowed dining room floor, and entering into the wooden-pillared archway of the living room. The walls almost lean in, eager spectators to the chaos that follows—roaring conversations, cackling laughter, girlish screams, and gossip fill the walls. As the thrifted decorations of arranged spices, art, and the occasional flower painting dangle on the exposed drywall—they rattle. The nightclub below joins in. It sends vibrations up through the building's worn bones and sets the night's rhythm whether they want it to or not.

After what felt like yet another impossible day, the bowed hallway floors groan under the weight of their own history. Whispering stories to the poet with every creak as she tiptoes the summit board to reach home. A once beautiful song, now mocking the ears of the poet. She lifts her heavy eyes to see cracks tracing their way down the walls like veins,

exposing the building's age. Red bricks peek through where the dry-wall has crumbled away, peering out like aching bones beneath thinning skin. The poet sulks at the state of her front stairs. The cold wind sweeps fallen leaves, snow, and stray bits of trash halfway up them, as if it were a comforting blanket these halls had come to love. How could such a historic monument sit in its own despair and filth?

Stomping up the rickety stairs, the poet's mind swirls on the thought of how one can steep in their own despair and filth. She makes her way to the empty space her best friend left behind weeks ago, and crumbles. The walls shift in discomfort. They're not sure whether to comfort her or stand firm on *I told you so* as she curls onto the floor. She speaks to the walls, hoping for a response, knowing they observed every betrayal, every lie, every fight, every attempt by the poet to pretend nothing ever happened. The walls, having no arms to direct or mouth to speak, cannot give the comfort the poet seeks. Rather, she is left to lay upon the cold wooden floor, until she deems it a good time to get back up.

In the later hours of the night, a lamp flicks on. The poet angrily shuffles her bed into the empty space she visited earlier. Hot tears crashing with the cold floor, she hastily fills the space with all of her belongings as if nothing ever left. The room, at a discomfortingly hot temperature, sits in stillness as she flops upon her bed. Still angry, still heartbroken, she stares at the walls. Burning for a response she traces the cracks with her eyes, searching for hidden scripture between them to set her bleeding heart free.

The poet squints at a slight discoloration she can't quite put a finger on. Until she scrambles from the bed to retrieve a tube of spackle and a putty knife—her father swore it would come in handy someday. Perhaps the building and her can hold one another accountable of healing in some odd way.

That night, the poet speaks to her own four walls, allowing every drip of heartbreak to bleed into the cracks as she spackles over them. Every story and every thought, sealed away. Blotches of bright pink polka dot watch as she dramatically flops back onto the bed, sweat now beading at her pale skin. She thanks the walls for listening at such an ungodly hour, cracks a long-forgotten smile, and promises they would dry white by morning. The walls, with their brand-new look, watch over the apartment and their newly rediscovered poet.

By first sunlight, the poet pays respect to the back of her building

as she hauls heaps of memory-soaked belongings to the dumpster. She looks up at the faded, chipped paint that clings to weathered brick, gripping desperately to what remains of a long-forgotten sign. It's message now lost to a time she'll never have the privilege of knowing. She hopes memories work in the same way.

Swinging open her front door, she smirks at the stairs she had recently condemned. "We're in this together now," she reminds the building with a soft pat to the exposed brick. She then slowly sweeps away every stray bit of leaf, snow, and trash that had made residency up there, listening intently to the stories each squeaky floorboard had to offer. Soon returning to the newly spackled room, the pink had faded with the cracks—ready for a new beginning.

The poet ponders if the apartment felt as much relief as she did at this moment. The four walls wondered if the poet knew she just spackled her own cracks, too.

Katelyn Bone is a third-year journalism major. She aspires to write creative nonfiction and poetry, and to spread her love of the human condition caught on a page. If she is not listening to music, she is enjoying an americano with a dash of cream at Urban Stampede.

Adventures in Bootcamp

Robert Moore, Jr.

In 1992, I joined the Navy. The reasons were many, but foremost were the need for funds to finish my undergraduate degree and a powerful desire to get out of West Texas. I was twenty-three at the time and may not have been thinking clearly.

To say the least, bootcamp was an interesting experience. Remember, this was 1992, so the experience was nothing like you see in movies like *Full Metal Jacket* or other Hollywood presentations, but it was summed up nicely by a statement made in a letter I received while in boot. The letter was from a friend of mine from high school. He'd joined the Navy five years before, right out of school. In the letter he said, "Right about now, your life is hell." He wasn't wrong, but there were some interesting happenings, too. It wasn't all hell and fire.

For instance, right off the arrival bus at Orlando Recruit Training Center, I nearly got myself in serious trouble. You see, I overheard two drill instructors discussing that incoming recruits weren't allowed to have shaving gel. Without thinking, I opened my mouth to speak, which would have gotten me into trouble right there. What I was going to say would have landed me in the brig though; as I almost explained that, yes, you could make a nice explosive with shave gel, and you only needed some household chemicals to do it. In my defense, it was around 3:00 AM and I had been up for almost 24 hours, so my thinking wasn't all that clear.

Due to various health issues, I was a member of four training companies. The third was the one where the most interesting things happened, and where I was a member the longest. It was also an integrated company, which means its makeup included men and women. This is an important detail later.

The first interesting story about bootcamp I'm going to relate isn't much of a story. Still, it's stuck with me, and I find it amusing. Again, I will point out that this was 1992. This wasn't the 1960s with a draft going on, so you could always opt out, refuse training, and go home. It wasn't even a dishonorable discharge to do so. I will also remind you that I was 23 and among a group of 18-year-olds fresh out of high school. It doesn't sound like much of an age difference, but it was significant.

For the event in question, we were in the first week of actual training, and it was our first time being "cycled." This entailed a rapid-fire alternation between sit-ups, push-ups, running in place, and doing "body builders." When doing this sort of thing, you are tired and in pain after just a few minutes.

We were about fifteen minutes into this routine when a young man near me just stopped. He comes to full attention and just stands there. One of the two company commanders (drill instructors) rushes over and gets in his face, screaming at him and demanding he get busy doing what the rest of us are doing. The whole time this young man is standing there, at attention mind you, proclaiming, "I'm refusing training, ma'am!" This may not seem like a big deal. Send him home, right? Except he's standing AT ATTENTION. He's still playing the game by the rules. I wanted to go over and yell at him. If you're refusing training, you refuse training. You sit down, stretch out on the floor, and let it be known without a doubt that you're not playing the game anymore. You certainly don't stand there at attention. That young man disappeared for the night but was back with us the next day in full training mode.

The next incident came a few days later. We were directed to the training pool and told to sit in the bleachers next to it. One of the company commanders steps up and announces, "I can't believe I have to ask this, but I'm required to. Is there anyone in this company who can't swim?" A full third of the 84 people raised their hands. The next words out of the company commander's mouth mirrored my thoughts: "What were you thinking? Navy. Ships. Water." Later I felt sorry for those people. The penalty for joining the Navy and not knowing how to swim is

that they teach you. This means getting up even earlier in the morning during bootcamp to go to the pool for your lessons. You also stay in boot until you learn or quit.

I must note that I almost joined them. Not because I couldn't swim; I'm from the Gulf Coastal region and swim like a fish. No, I was on my last leg by this point. I'd contracted pneumonia. It's called "recruit crud," and most recruits come down with some level of it. For me, though, it led to my being hospitalized with IV antibiotics being pumped into my arm. Thus, I was there at the pool—coughing my head off, feverish, and barely able to breathe—but there was no way I was failing that swim test. I had a rescuer in scuba around me the whole time, but I passed the test. The pneumonia did lead to the medics learning just how bad my lungs were, though, and that got me put out of the Navy in bootcamp.

But the weekend before I went into the hospital, there was one more interesting incident that happened. It was Sunday—on Sunday you got to relax a little as the company commanders weren't allowed to come in until afternoon. You still had to get up and follow routine, but at least you didn't have to stress about being dropped for more push-ups. This was also while I was in my third company, the integrated company, so there were men and women present. We didn't mix until well after wake-up, mind you, so relax. There's no bunking together or anything like that.

I'd been made yeoman for this company, which means I was the company's clerk. It also meant I was third in rank among us recruits. I'd also earned the reputation of being a good guy to come to for advice. In my defense, I mostly just listened and asked questions until the person talking with me worked out the problem on their own.

Getting back to the story, I was in the company office on this Sunday, performing my secretarial duties before the company commanders arrived. In the middle of this, three of my shipmates come barging into the office. This wasn't something they were supposed to do. There's a procedure you're supposed to follow when you're in boot, and just rushing in wasn't it.

"Come quick, Yo-Yo." The nickname for yeomen was "yo-yo," but this was another breach of protocol. I was the company commanders' "yo-yo," not the rest of the company's. The company was supposed to call me "recruit petty officer." Anyway, they went on to say, "We've got a situation out here."

I didn't know what the situation was, but I knew if they were bargaining in like that, it had to be something serious. I darted out of the office after them. I was ready to marshal troops, move people, and get the situation under control. What I was not prepared for was coming through a group of people circled around a young man and woman huddled together, hugging each other. I don't think I need to explain that this wasn't allowed.

My lips pursed, and I was ready to lay down the law, but noticed they were sobbing on each other's shoulders. A different approach was in order.

"Alright, everybody back up. What's going on here? You two know there's not supposed to be fraternization." I crouched down with them and listened to their tale of woe. A tale quite different from what I was expecting.

It turned out that these two hadn't met in bootcamp. They were, in fact, high school sweethearts. They'd enlisted together and gotten married a few days before they shipped out for bootcamp.

Now, they should have been separated and put into different training companies. That's not what happened, though, and here they were in the same company. This was bad. They were terrified that they'd be blamed for the mistake and punished for it. It took some work, but I finally calmed them so we could talk, or more to the point so they would listen.

"Look," I told them. "Right now, this isn't your fault. It shouldn't have happened, and while you should have spoken up before now, right now, it isn't your fault."

I didn't have to say it. They heard the word: "But?"

"But if the company commanders find out on their own, and they will, then it's your fault and there'll be hell to pay."

This made them panic again. "They'll kick us out." They were convinced of this.

"No, but they might if you let them figure it out. Now they'll probably just reassign one of you to a new company, which is better than the alternative, right?"

"So, what do we do, Yo-Yo?"

"First, the company commanders don't get here until 1300. When they get here, the two of you are going to be posted by the office door waiting for them. Second, you're going to explain the situation to them

calmly and clearly. Finally, you're going to listen to them and be prepared to be separated for the rest of boot."

It was the best I could do for them. They followed my directions, though, and at 1300 they were posted outside the office door, standing at attention. The company commanders came in, saw them, stopped, and stared for a minute. "So, you're our married couple." My advice to them couldn't have been better timed.

I was kicked out of the office at that point, so I didn't hear what happened firsthand. I was told the story later. The gist is that the commanders had come into the barracks building that morning and were jokingly asked how their married couple was doing by one of the other company commanders (how they'd found out is still a mystery to me.) They were blind-sided by this, so they were rather upset when they marched into our barracks. It was made clear to the young couple that had they been anywhere else when our company commanders arrived, there would have been hell to pay. Had they not been willing to face the consequences, it would have gone hard for them. As it was, they were allowed to stay in the same company together. There could still be no fraternization. They were told that they could get their hand-holding in, and no more, on Sundays before the company commanders arrived.

All of this was relayed to me by the couple weeks later, when I got out of the hospital and was shadowing the company to catch up with them. The aim was that I would be able to rejoin them in training instead of needing to go to a fourth company. It was one of the few times in my life where I had been hugged by someone who wasn't a family member or long-time friend.

Unfortunately, I was unable to shadow the third company for a 24-hour period. I was released for active duty a few hours after the hug. Since I didn't get to shadow them for at least a day, I was re-assigned to the fourth company.

It turned out they needn't have bothered. They finally figured out how bad my lungs were. I was born with a form of COPD, not that it was called such then. As little as this condition seemed to slow me down, though, it made it so they couldn't put me on a submarine. Since I was in training to be a nuclear technician, that's where they wanted me, and so I was discharged as unfit for duty.

To this day, I think about these stories, especially about the young couple. Did they make it to graduation? If they did, were they togeth-

er in the same company, or were they eventually split up? Honestly, I just wonder what happened to them. I'd like to think that they made it through and did so together. Not only that, but I hope it was the start of many adventures that they shared.

I must admit that I also think about what would have happened if I'd been able to stay in the Navy. How would my life be different? Would I have made officer like I'd planned? I also wonder how things would have turned out if I hadn't joined the Navy at all. I certainly wouldn't have these stories to tell.

Robert Moore, Jr., is the lab manager for the Department of Physics & Astrophysics. He's also a student pursuing a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. In his limited spare time, he writes, considering himself a storyteller and hoping others will join him around the fire and share a tale.

contributors

Clara Anderson-Cameron is a senior English student. The last four years have been spent surrounded by people who love words just as much as she does, and for that, she couldn't be more grateful.

Caius Buran is a McNair scholar pursuing a bachelor of arts in English and certificates in creative writing and classical studies at the University of North Dakota. His free time is spent starring on and creating for *9mm Retirement Radio*, an actual-play podcast, and doting on his dog, two cats, and ball python.

Katelyn Bone is a third-year journalism major. She aspires to write creative nonfiction and poetry, and to spread her love of the human condition caught on a page. If she is not listening to music, she is enjoying an americano with a dash of cream at Urban Stampede.

Jo Diana is an English major with a minor in journalism. Influenced by the storytelling and lyricism of 1960s folk music, particularly that of Bob Dylan, she writes with an emphasis on rhythm, voice, and emotion. Her work often explores how language shapes memory and meaning.

Emily Forster is an accounting major who writes in her free time. She

enjoys reading sci-fi novels. When she's not reading or writing, she's training for her next triathlon.

When asked for a list of things he likes by his secret santa, **Casey Fuller** compiled this list: coffee, vintage Italian bike frames, and the night. He continues walking down his English PhD candidacy at UND like a veteran prizefighter, lumbering forward, chopping at the body.

Sarah Golden is a junior majoring in accounting, with plans to pursue her master's of accountancy and CPA after graduation. In the rare instance where she isn't running from one of her many Dungeons & Dragons games to the next, she enjoys collecting uniquely shaped earrings, playing board games, and making her roommates' cat regret waking her up too early.

Rachel Held is a sophomore at the University of North Dakota majoring in English and minoring in journalism. She hopes to be a published novelist in her future. Rachel enjoys writing poetry along with journalistic stories and fiction. In her free time she enjoys reading thriller/mystery fiction and watching old movies, for example, *The Blob* (1958).

Mathias Klink is a freshman at the University of North Dakota who is majoring in commercial aviation. He is from Budd Lake, New Jersey, and attended Mount Olive High School. Besides being a pilot and his love for aviation, Mathias also loves sports, like soccer and football, as well as nature, and travelling the world.

Jay Kupitz is a current student who fell into mechanical engineering as his major, with a minor in computer science. He's the proud coach to a U11 soccer team that scored thirty-eight goals in eight games, finishing the season 5-3. He finds motivation and inspiration from every person he meets, and he feels especially invigorated and carefree when bringing people together.

Tabitha Lee is a twenty-year-old genderfluid individual pursuing their bachelor's in English with certificates in creative writing and possibly in writing, editing, and publishing. He enjoys spending time with their cat and writing, enjoying time with their wonderful fiancées, and snuggling

up with a good book.

Rylee Lunn is a senior at UND studying philosophy and psychology. She wants to continue her education in counseling psychology so that she can combine her love of philosophy and psychology to help others in a meaningful way. She loves creating her own art through painting and photography, finding inspiration in the places she travels to. She hopes to one day publish her own book of some kind and include her own photographs, drawings, or paintings.

Janie Marino is an English Ph.D. student at UND who previously studied fine arts and graphic design at the Kansas City Art Institute and earned her M.A. in English at the University of Wyoming. Now she combines these disciplines, creating multimodal work that blends literary and visual art. Her academic interests include aestheticism, surrealism, avant-gardism, medieval art, and humor. Outside of school, she loves watching bad movies and reading good books. Her favorites include anything by Kurt Vonnegut, mystery novels, and nonfiction disaster narratives, particularly those featuring shipwrecks, survival cannibalism, and arctic exploration gone wrong.

Robert Moore, Jr., is the lab manager for the Department of Physics & Astrophysics. He's also a student pursuing a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. In his limited spare time, he writes, considering himself a storyteller and hoping others will join him around the fire and share a tale.

Ahna Mosley is a criminal justice major who enjoys photography and writing. She hopes people will enjoy the photos she has taken and edited.

Gabby Park is a senior at UND, working on her bachelor's in English, with a certificate in creative writing and a certificate in writing, editing, and publishing. She is currently interning with *North Dakota Quarterly* and on the Adelphi board. She enjoys baking, drawing, reading, writing, and playing video games in her free time; currently, she is creating a video game of her own with her friends. She hopes to soon rescue a dog with her fiancé, and maybe even a cat.

Jonathan Sladko is a writer, photographer, pilot, and storm chaser. Originally from Alaska, he has spent the last five years at UND studying English literature, aviation, and atmospheric science.

Edward Anthony Tortorelli is a current student studying sociology as well as too many STEM subjects. He loves a good book, traveling, and spending time with his pets Moose, Mochi, and Tofu.

Audrey Tumberg is a junior in the English program at UND. Audrey hopes to continue her passion of the literary scene through a career in editing and publishing. In her spare time, Audrey enjoys listening to music, people watching, and reading. You can often find Audrey downtown getting a cup of coffee and scribbling down new ideas for poems.

Anya Unser is a freshman English major from Aberdeen, South Dakota. Post-master's degree, she plans to pursue a career in developmental editing. When she's not dedicating her time to speed-running her degree, she's either reading the same novel she's been trying to finish all year, watching *Gilmore Girls* again, or making yet another playlist on Spotify.

Zoe Wanner is a transfer student from Bismarck State College, in her junior year of chemical engineering. She grew up in Boise, Idaho, with a love of poetry, painting, and every art in between. she loves to read in her free time, and spend time playing board games with friends.

Robin Whittington is a genderfluid electrical engineering major who enjoys writing poetry to unwind. They also enjoy spending time with their wonderful partners, who end up becoming muses for some of their poetry.

Josephina Wieczorek-Bettendorf is a junior at the University of North Dakota, where she's studying English with certificates in classical languages and writing, editing, and publishing. She plans to pursue a PhD and become a professor of English. Josephina enjoys writing as a means of capturing personal memories and creating stories that will make a lasting impact on others. When she isn't writing, she enjoys reading, watching movies, and spending time with her husband Jonah and her

cat, Sebastian.

Liv Wyland is a senior at the UND majoring in commercial aviation with a specialization in aviation safety and minoring in women and gender studies. When they aren't flying, they enjoy sketching the world around them, backpacking adventures, cooking and eating good food, and blasting music with the car windows down.

Floodwall

Clara Anderson-Cameron
Caius Buran
Katelyn Bone
Jo Diana
Emily Forster
Casey Fuller
Sarah Golden
Rachel Held
Mathias Klinke
Jay Kupitz
Tabitha Lee
Rylee Lunnie
Janie Marino
Robert Moore, Jr.
Ahna Mosley
Gabby Park
Jonathan Sladko
Edward Tortorelli
Audrey Tumberg
Anya Unser
Zoe Wanner
Robin Whittington
Josephina Wiczorek-Bettendorf
Liv Wyland

